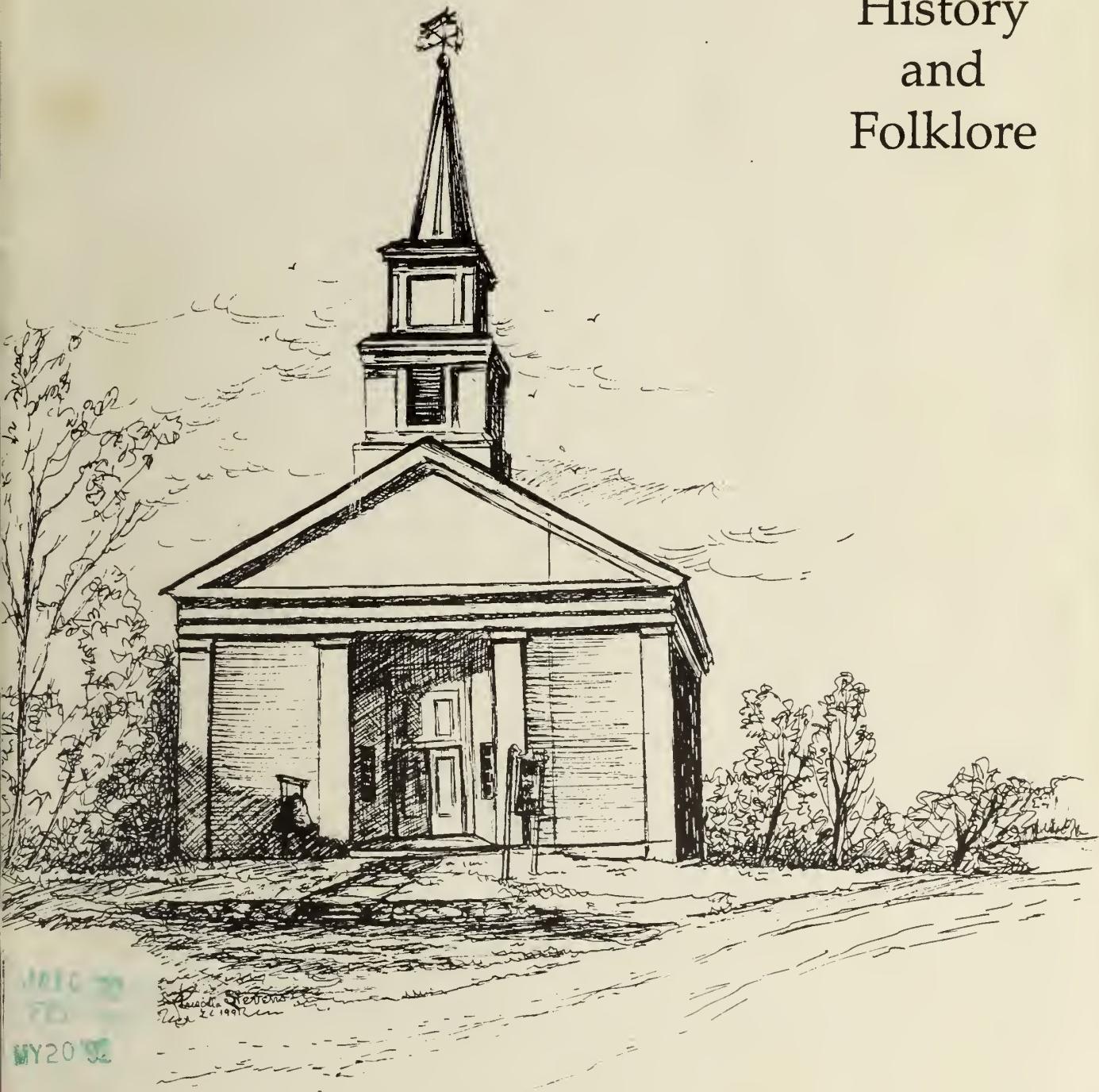


STONE WALLS

History
and
Folklore



Fall 1991
\$2.50

As I write this, we've had our first killing frost of the year; the ground and auto are coated with crystal white and the furnace has kicked in automatically for the first time. This is a wonderful and beautiful time of year for those of us who live in New England -- no other part of the country or world can compare with the autumn beauty of our rolling hills.

It's the time of year to enjoy the last fleeting, crisp, sunny fall days -- to savor the taste of crunchy fresh apples and the tang of fresh-pressed cider -- taking long walks through little-traveled country paths, hearing the crunch of flaming red and yellow leaves under our walking shoes -- taking the kids for noisy hayrides and helping them pick out the "perfect pumpkin for Hallowe'en -- to be made later on into steaming pumpkin pies. The air is cleaner, fresher at this time of year -- even more so now that the leaves are a garden material, and not for burning.

Alas, the Yankee 'work ethic' within us all dictates that it is also the time for cleaning up our gardens in preparation for winter and

putting the grinning scarecrow away in the back shed, raking up huge piles of leaves for composting, putting more sunflower seeds in the birdfeeder and topping off and realigning the stone walls that the kids have been jumping over and knocking down on their way to the playground and river swimming hole ... And ... doing the Fall Housecleaning!! Speaking of which ---

Stone Walls depends on a small core-group of staff writers and contributions from you, our faithful readers. Submitted material is quickly used up. While you are cleaning your way through desks, bureau drawers and attic chests, look and see if you might have something of interest to share with our other readers. We're desperate for 'fresh' material. What you might consider commonplace or 'hum-drum' might be of considerable interest to others. Why don't you take a chance and send it on to us and let us decide? And of course, we are always looking for original stories and genealogical inquiries. Wouldn't it be great to have 'too much' for our next issue?!

Hopefully ---

—Harry Bishop

Cover drawing by P.J. Stevens

STONE WALLS

Box 85

Huntington, Massachusetts 01050

Vol. 18, No. 3

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LUCY H. CONANT 1926 - 1991

Our dear friend and co-editor Lucy passed away on October 27, 1991 after a short illness. We express our sincere sympathy to her family. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

—Editorial Board

The Old Hill Church

The following apostrophe was paid to the First Congregational Church, Norwich, Mass., at the re-opening service, October 15, 1899, by the pastor, Rev. Webster L. Hendrick. It was submitted by Priscilla Stevens Schreibel of Nashua, N.H., former resident of Huntington.

Sentinel-like on the grand old hill,
Where years ago she was builded, still
Stands the dear old church, yet seeming to see,
Like a prophet, the things that are yet to be.
The sunbeams, wandering to and fro,
Seem to rest on her with a tender glow,
As though weary of wandering, tired of search,
They would rest content on the old "First" church.

The place is sacred and dear, in truth,
And has been ever since the days of youth.
You entered its door when life was new,
Perhaps as children — your whole life through
It has seemed to watch o'er your joys and woes,
With an interest that only a mother knows;
Her children in love have been faithfully nursed,
And they well may honor the dear old First.

In its hallowed walls what memories throng,
Of those now singing the grand "new song" —
Its strains seem echoing sweet and low,
And forms you loved in the long ago,
With joyous greeting, with angel smiles,
Seem moving again up the well known aisles —
Their faces bright as you knew them erst,
Bring Heaven's own light to the dear old First!

What sounds have broken the quiet here!
Hymn and anthem, and words of cheer!
What sighs the Sabbath calm has stirred
Of secret, God only heard.
What prayers for pardon, what cries for aid,
From souls repenting and sore afraid;
Surely He answered each prayer which burst
From a faith-charged heart in the dear old First.

Noble the hearts that planned it so;
Strongly they built in the long ago —
And strong and attractive it stands today,
And will stand long after we've passed away!
Then, Christian hearts, be firm and true,
Though wealth be wanting and numbers few;
Let us still continue to work and pray —
For God will help in His good way!
And still let us gather within these walls
To praise, when the bell of First calls!

The Drum Factory

By Wilhelmina Tryon



Noble & Cooley Factory: Present location - circa 1902

As boys, Noble and Cooley went fishing to Hartland and Congamond Ponds and formed a friendship that would last a lifetime. Both grew up to become, first farmers, and finally, with the founding of the Noble and Cooley Drum Factory, businessmen and manufacturers.

James P. Cooley, whose father had been a lawyer, was born May 11, 1820. He was a man interested in town affairs; he conducted a choral group and sold melodians. Silas Noble, born December 2, 1824, was a carpenter and tinkerer who liked making things with his hands.

According to diaries kept by James Cooley, the pair once traveled to Pittsfield to buy melodians. While there, the men saw some drums and Noble remarked that he could

probably make one. The idea stayed with him. (James Cooley kept diaries throughout his adult life, a habit he passed down to his son. The text of the Cooley diaries which give a view of life in the 1800s, is presently being typed from the fragile originals and will be available at the Granville Library when complete.)

One evening the two men were in the Noble kitchen where Silas was attempting to make a drum. It wasn't a very good drum, but he continued his efforts for several weeks until he reached the point where he was certain he could make drums for market.

Silas decided a factory with specialized equipment for drum making was needed and enlisted Cooley's help. The two became partners in the venture and the first drum

shop was built in East Granville. Although the western part of town was larger, they chose their site because of its proximity to Westfield where the railroad was located. By January of 1854 the pair was manufacturing drums by hand in a little shop at the Charles Flagg house near the schoolhouse on the north side of South Lane One. (The house and school building are no longer standing.)

Within three years Noble and Cooley were becoming well known. They employed five hands and had outgrown their first factory. In

By 1860 the business was booming. The Lincoln presidential campaign had started and Noble and Cooley were to create a special drum to be used in his campaign. They sent to Illinois for a rail that Mr. Lincoln had split which would be used in the drum shell. It was an expensive drum, with hooks of solid silver and red, white and blue cord of pure silk. The Lincoln drum was later presented to the 10th Massachusetts Regiment and was undoubtedly lost in battle.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, drums



Noble & Cooley on Granby Road - circa 1889

1857 they moved off East Granville Hill to a new shop on the east side of Granby road opposite the present post office. The shop was forty feet long by thirty feet wide and two stories high. A dam to provide water power was built beside the South East District School. (The school used to stand behind the Post Office about where Randolph Petersen's house now stands; it was torn down in 1935.) With the addition of water power, machinery could now be used and the number of employees grew to fifteen.

were selling faster than they could be made. The brook by the factory could no longer furnish enough water power and, in 1865, a twenty-horsepower steam engine was added. (Later, in 1872, this was replaced by one with double its capacity.) The payroll had now grown to forty employees.

For Grant's first presidential campaign in Boston they made what is believed to be the largest drum on record. It was also used for the Centennial celebration in 1876. Eight feet in diameter, it was said that a pair of horses

was driven through the barrel of the drum before it was shipped to Granville. The heads were fashioned from single oxen skins which were found only after an extensive search. At that time it cost \$200.00 to manufacture. After it was made it was kept in the Coliseum in Boston and was destroyed when that building was blown down in a storm.

Over the years the firm has made things other than drums. In 1866 they produced lawn and parlor croquet sets; they made cigar lighters and sold 3,036 barrels of them. Other

had increased to 100,000.

With drum making proving to be so successful many others wished to get into the business. Bevil C. Dickinson and his son Ethan had a shop on the Gorge Road; Adolph Bruch and Edmund Barlow bought Edward Holcomb's saw mill and keg shop on Water Street and began manufacturing drums. Bruch had worked for Noble and Cooley and Barlow had been in the employ of Dickinson. Their plant was built where portions of the Noble and Cooley firm now stands. Edwin N.



Granby Road Fire - 1889

non-drum items have included toothpicks, rolling hoops for children, carriages for both children and dolls, mallet heads, ten-pins, zithers, tambourines and embroidery hoops.

Noble and Cooley made toy drums as well as military drums during the Civil War. For many years the drums were made of wood and skin, and they manufactured their own drum sticks. With the advent of a color printing process on tin, more shells came to be made of metal. In 1854 they produced 631 drums; by 1873 the total output of the plant

Henry joined the firm, which he and Carlos Gibbons later bought out, continuing to make drums until 1889.

Silas Noble died in 1888 and his son Orville took his place in the business. In 1889 James P. Cooley died and was succeeded by his son, Ralph B. Cooley. In that same year the Granby Road shop was destroyed by fire. The two sons went to Gibbons and Henry to see if they could buy their factory. They were able to make the purchase, and once again Noble and Cooley was in the drum business.

The year after the Noble and Cooley fire, the Dickinson shop also burned. In 1902 fire struck Noble and Cooley again. One building was destroyed and a bridge over the road came down. By the end of the year the plant was rebuilt.

At the beginning of the 20th century big business was overrunning smaller firms, and the toy trade of which Noble and Cooley was a part, did not escape. In December of 1902 the National Novelty Corporation was organized in New York, taking over about 95 percent of the novelty concerns in the U.S. by January of 1903. Noble and Cooley went with the larger concern; in time, even bigger groups took over. Business was very unsatisfactory, and Messrs. Noble and Cooley applied to the court for the appointment of a receiver. It was granted and the "trust" was broken up; when the Granville shop came up for sale. Noble and Cooley were able to buy it back.

The business was incorporated as the Noble and Cooley Company. Upon the death of Mr. Noble in 1921 Mr. Cooley purchased his interest and the firm continued to be operated by Ralph B. Cooley and his nephew Ralph G. Hiers. Cooley died in 1935 and Hiers in 1953. Hiers two sons, Herbert and Ralph, continued to run the shop. When they retired it was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. John Jones. Mrs. Jones is the daughter of Ralph Hiers and the granddaughter of Ralph G. Hiers.

Over the years the drum shop produced notable changes in the small town of Granville. When the factory on Granby Road was built, Jockey Corners, as that section was then called, was but a tiny hamlet. As the factory expanded more families came and new homes were built, bringing more trade to the stores and need for another meeting house. In 1883 the Post Office there was officially changed to Granville, and the name Jockey Corners began to fade, though some "old timers" still refer to it as The Corners and the hill as The Center. With the building of a large library in 1900, it seemed that the population center had shifted to East Granville.

In 1880 The Drum Shop had its own brass band called the Drum Makers Band. They played for special occasions in Granville and neighboring towns. After a decade the band went out of existence.

Over the years Noble and Cooley has seen a lot of changes, both in the town where it was born and in the products it has marketed and the ways in which they were made. After World War II the drum factory developed a gift line, making lamps, waste baskets, ice buckets and other items using a colonial motif. Today, one hundred and thirty-seven years after its first drum was produced, the firm still makes the drums that made it famous, with beautiful wooden shells that have the fine handmade look of yesteryear.

A walk through the factory proves to be a unique melding of old and new. Old footworn stairs look the same as they might have fifty years ago, while updated machinery operates smoothly and efficiently. Thirty people are now employed full time, but during the rush season as many as 60-100 may work at the plant.

When you leave you feel that long after you are gone, drums will still be made, with care and precision, at the Noble and Cooley Drum Shop.

Credits:

The James P. Cooley Diaries—Mrs. Ralph B. Hiers
History of Granville, Massachusetts—Albion B. Wilson, 1954

Rich Resources Isolated—Rev. Herman G. Patt, from Western New England Magazine, 1912

Vital Records of Granville to 1850-1914

Pictures from Ellis Goodrich Collection; Elizabeth Cone Collection; local post cards from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Willard A. Tryon.

Editor's Note: Wilhelmina Tryon is a longtime resident of the town of Granville with an avid interest in its history.

The Diary of William H. Shaw

1864-1865

PART VI

December 1864 - continued from Summer '91

A lapse of two weeks.

Dec. 7th. I left for New York. Found the friends there all well. Made them visits, then on the 12th at 7 o'clock A.M. left for the hospital at Wilmington, Delaware. Arrived at 2 o'clock, P.M.

Dec. 13th. Got a pass to go onto the street, but it was so cold I did not stay long. Wrote to Julia (who was in Meriden,) and Adaline Shaw.

Dec. 14th. Wrote to Elijah and home.

Dec. 15th. Dupont's powder mill blew up today. 10 persons killed. I went to see the ruins. What a sad sight!

Dec. 18th. Sunday. Fine. Went to church in the morning. Wrote to Julia and Louise. Sent Julia a silver pencil.

Dec. 20th. Clear and cold. Remained in the hospital all day. Letter from Julia. Wrote to Comrade Sheldon and Mother Pollard.

Dec. 22nd. Beautiful day. I am feeling quite well. The ladies of Wilmington gave us a splendid dinner today. It was as fine a table as I ever sat down to. God bless the loyal women of the north, and especially those of Wilmington.

Dec. 25th. Xmas day, the day of our Saviour's birth. Wrote to Adaline, Francis, and Charlie.

Dec. 26th. Rainy. Good news from Sherman. He has taken Atlanta, Georgia.

Dec. 27th. Wrote to cousin Almon Mitchell.

Dec. 28th. Rainy. Received letters from comrade Sheldon, John Bissell, and Julia. Answered her letter.

Dec. 29th. Cold. Drew clothing. Overcoat, pants, blanket, shirts, and two pairs of drawers.

Dec. 31st. Saturday. Storm. Some snow. This is the last day of the year. How many commenced the year with high hopes and expectations, but how soon blasted. How many who commence the coming year will live to see its close. Shall I? God grant that I may live to see my friends once more.

JANUARY 1865

Jan. 1st. Sunday. Clear and cold. Wrote to Julia, Elijah, and Minerva.

Jan 2nd. Received a nice long letter from cousin Almon Mitchell. From the 2nd to the 18th is about the same every day. Received many letters and answered them.

Jan. 18th. Fort Fisher taken by our army. Good news. Went on the street. Bought a silk handkerchief. Paid \$1.50 for it.

Jan 20th. Hemmed my handkerchief.

Jan 23rd. Had general inspection. I am marked for my regiment and am ready to go. 60 from here going to the front.

Jan 25th. Clear and cold. Left Tilton hospital for my regiment. Went as far as Baltimore. Received letters from cousin Deborah Snow and Francis.

Jan. 26th. Cold. Waiting here for transportation. Wrote to Julia, Francis, and Charlie.

Jan 27th. Still waiting to go to my regiment. But there is so much ice in the harbor that vessels cannot go out.

Jan 28th. Still very cold. Ice still in the harbour. Thousands are skating on it today. Wrote to cousin Deborah Snow.

Jan. 29th. Sunday. A little warmer. Shall be glad when I get back to my regiment.

Jan. 30th. A beautiful day. We left Frederick Hill, Baltimore, and took a steamer for City Point, but did not leave as she was not coaled. Cold on board the steamer.

Jan 31st. Coaled the steamer last night. Today they have taken in water and a few rations. We expect to start soon.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1st, 1865. Cold and cloudy. Did not start yesterday as the engine gave out just as we started. But we started today, but got along very slow on account of the ice in the harbor and bay.

Feb. 2nd. Have got through the ice and reached Point Lookout. Have sent a boat ahead after rations. Got soft bread, coffee, and bacon. Now we are really started.

Feb. 3rd. Reached Fortress Monroe last night, and anchored until this morning, as we are to report here. 11 o'clock, A.M. have started again for City Point.

Feb. 4th. Five days. Have at last reached City Point and are off the old craft. Have washed up and now am waiting to be sent to my regiment.

Feb. 5th. Sunday. Beautiful day. Arrived at my regiment today, and glad to get here. Found our division packed up ready to move. Went at 7 o'clock, A.M. to support the 2nd and 5th corps which have gone down to the left.

Feb. 6th. Fine Day. Did some washing. Some Johnnies came along that our troops took yesterday. I heard we have got the South Side railroad. Received letter from Julia and wrote to her and home.

Feb. 7th. Cold and rainy. The boys on duty must suffer with cold. Very, very heavy firing on the left this afternoon. Wrote to cousin Frank Orcutt and Arnin Bemis.

Feb. 8th. The regiment returned to camp this morning. The boys pretty well tired out. I am not feeling very well.

Feb. 9. Went on picket. Quiet all along the lines.

Feb 10th. Fair. Came in from picket, had a

cold night of it, but am feeling better.

Feb. 11th. Still fine weather. Not doing much. Wrote to Charlie.

Feb. 12th. Sunday. Clear and cold. Sunday morning inspection.

Feb 13th. Cold. All quiet. Wrote to Julia.

Feb. 14th. I was detailed on fatigue duty with a squad of men to work on Fort Fisher.

Feb. 15th. Rainy. Doing nothing. Letter from Charlie. Wrote to Tatie Taylor.

Feb. 16th. All quiet in camp. Heavy firing on our right. That means that many of the boys are dropping out of the ranks for good. Wrote to Elijah and J.W. Burney.

Feb. 17th. Wet day. 140 rebel deserters came into camp last night. They were sent to the rear under guard. Deserters from rebel lines are coming in now quite often.

Feb. 18th. Fine overhead, but very muddy. Letter from Almon Mitchell.

Feb. 19th. Sunday. Beautiful day. Morning inspection. Wrote to William R. Orcutt.

Feb. 20th. Fine. I am on camp guard. Grand review of the 1st division, 6th corps today. Received letter from Sallie Little.

Feb. 21st. Another fine day. Glorious news. Charlestown is now in our possession. 100 guns fired in honor of the victory.

Feb. 23rd. Rainy. We were up this morning at 5 o'clock, A.M. formed in line of battle, expecting an attack, but none was made.

Feb. 24th. Went on picket.

Feb. 25th. Came in from picket. Deserters still coming into our lines.

Feb. 26th. Sunday. Pleasant. All quiet. Wrote to Julia, Mr. Dana, and James F. Allan.

Feb. 27th. Rainy day. Mustered for pay today. Julia's birthday. Wrote to her.

MARCH

Mar. 1st, 1865. Wednesday. Cloudy. All quiet. Received a good letter from my friend Webster Nash, the portrait painter.

Mar. 2nd. Rainy. All quiet. Went to the woods. Got a back load of wood for our fire. All the boys had to get their wood on the way.

Mar. 3rd. Still rainy. General Early captured by General Sheridan yesterday. 38 rebels

came into our lines. One was accidentally killed coming in.

Mar. 4th. Still rainy. All quiet. Received letters from Tatie Taylor and Adaline Shaw. Was paid off today.

Mar. 5th. Sunday. Beautiful day. Morning inspection.

Mar. 6th. Pleasant. Went on camp guard. All quiet.

Mar. 7th. Came off guard.

Mar. 8th. Rainy. Letter from Julia. Wrote to Tatie Taylor.

Mar. 9th. Cloudy. Wrote to Frank and Charlie. Had some pictures taken.

Mar. 10th. Wet day. Wrote to Austin Bates. Sent him one of my pictures.

Mar. 13th. Sunday. Fine. Received letters from home, Francis and J.W. Gurney

Mar. 14th. Company and battalion drill under Captain Edwards. All excitement in camp. Received orders to be ready to move. Pack up all surplus baggage in cover and send to the rear. There was a bad case out on the picket line today. 2 mounted men supposed to be rebel spies ran the pickets. A pretty bold thing to do. 2 men and an officer were arrested for letting them through without shooting them.

Mar. 15th. Warm. Have not moved yet, but have orders often to be ready. Pontoon train moving toward the left. At 11 o'clock this morning the line formed in the pits and stood at arms about one hour and then broke ranks and lay around. Received a letter from Almon Mitchell.

Mar. 16th. Warm and windy. Had brigade dress parade. The wind blowing a gale this P.M.

Mar. 17th. Had horse and foot races in the 2nd corps today. Had a monthly inspection. Our shirts inspected on us. Letter from Mr. Guilford.

Mar. 19th. Sunday. Beautiful day. Morning inspection. Received letters from Julia, Elijah and Sallie Little. Wrote to Julia and home.

Mar. 20th. Fine. Our division at the 6th corps was reviewed by General Meade.

Mar. 21st. Rainy. Company drill. Wrote to Cousin Deborah Snow.

Mar. 22nd. Very windy.

Mar. 23rd. Tents blown down. All quiet except the wind.

Mar. 24th. Fine. Went on picket. All quiet along the lines.

Mar. 25th. at 4 o'clock A.M. the enemy charged on our works in front of the 9th Corps at Fort Stedman. Were ordered up, but before we could get there the 9th corps boys had retaken the works and some 2,500 prisoners. We returned to camp, then was ordered to the left. There was heavy fighting the whole length of the line. President Lincoln and General Meade here. At 3 o'clock this afternoon we charged on the rebels at Fort Fisher. Captured their skirmish pits and about 3,000 men. Our loss was 1,500. Paul Trotier, one of our company was wounded by a shell.

Mar. 26th. Sunday. Still on picket. The two picket lines are so close together that we can call to each other as we do often. Wood is getting scarce. We have to have it for fires for coffee. There was a tree that stood between the lines near where I was on picket. Today a reb yelled over to me and says, "Yank, (they call us Yanks and we call them Johnnies) Will you help me cut that tree and divide the wood? Yes, says Yank, so they met and cut down the tree, when they had it cut, Johnny says to Yank, you help me carry my wood over to our lines, and then I will help you carry yours over to your lines. So Yank did and when they had the last of it brought to our lines, Johnny says: You look comfortable over there and I am not going back and he did not. A short time before this there was four Johnnies with a six mule team going for wood between the lines. They did not stop for wood, but drove right on into our lines and gave up the team to our provost marshall.

Mar. 27th. Fine day. Major Young of General Sheridan's staff is in camp today to see the boys. Major Young is a great favorite of ours and a fine officer. Sheridan and his cavalry are at headquarters, are going on a raid with part of the 5th corps.

Mar. 28th. Rumors of a move. Afternoon a general movement is in progress towards our left. Drew six days rations. Expect to go with Sheridan.

Mar 29th. The 24th white and the 25th colored corps have gone to the left and Sheridan's cavalry started. Heavy cannonading on the right. At night the cannonading was kept up and so constant was the firing from the heavy mortars, that we could see as well as if the moon shone, although the hardest firing was nearly fifteen miles off. The burning fuse of the shells passing through the air from the great mortars was what caused the light. These mortars were on our gun boats on the James River, shelling the rebels' camp. We fell in and remained in the rifle pits. Are under orders to be ready to march at a moment's notice.

Mar 30th. Rainy day. Hear fighting on our left. At dark received orders to fall in. We took down and packed tents and lay in line until midnight, when we went to our quarters and put up tents again. This is what wears out the boys. No sleep or rest. All prisoners have axes but no guns. Captain Hopkins is in command of the regiment.

Mar. 31st. Rainy. We have been fooling around all day, packing and unpacking, falling in and standing a while and then breaking ranks, but still in camp. All this and more for the Union. Hard fighting on our left. General Grant pounding away at them.

APRIL

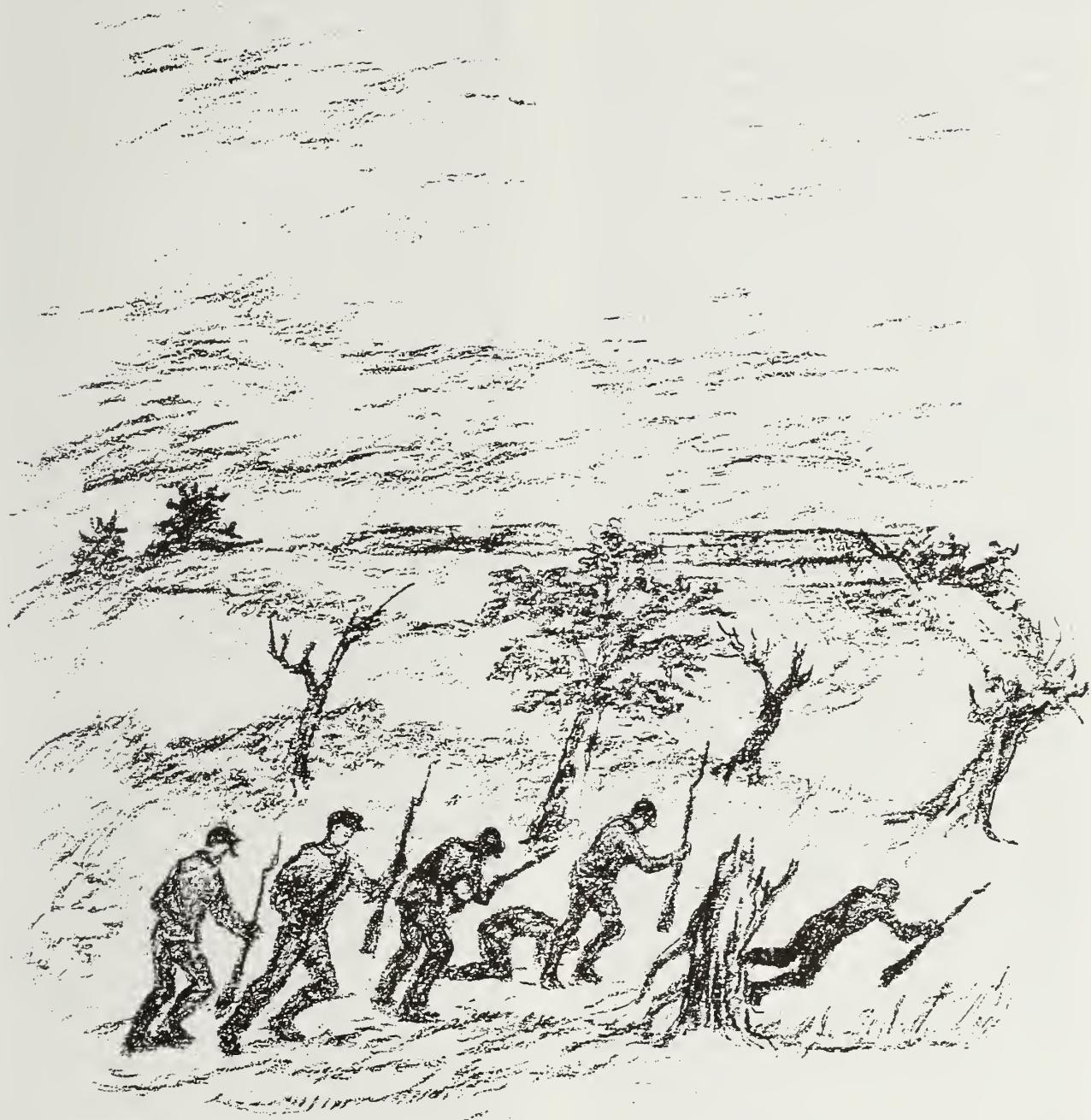
Apr. 1st, 1865. Fine day. Rumors that we are to get out of this tonight. Heavy firing on the left. Last night we broke camp and moved as near to the enemy's lines as possible without them knowing we were there. Formed in line of battle, skirmishers and pioneers in front. The two lines were not more than eight or ten rods apart. Firing between the two skirmish lines all night, at one time it was very heavy. Lt. Sheldon (who bunked with me all through the war) was very anxious and was whispering, the rebels know we are here. Such times as these are what try men. When we know at day-break we were to charge the enemy's

works, and wondering who of us will be here when night comes on again.

Apr. 2nd. Sunday. Beautiful day. We made an assault on the enemy's lines at 4 o'clock this morning and carried them. Our regiment took one fort with three guns and a rebel battle flag. In taking the fort, we had to climb over or scramble through a heavy line of abatis, jump down into a wide, deep ditch that surrounded the fort and jump down inside, while working to get through the abatis. Comrade Sheldon was wounded in the hand. Morning we reformed our lines and pushed on toward Petersburg and halted for the night within a few hundred yards of the city. At 4 o'clock this afternoon went on the skirmish line with many others under Colonel Edwards, which brought us very near the city. We could plainly see the enemy hard at work throwing up breastworks and their officers riding back and forth along their lines, while we were picking them off with our rifles. Midnight, the army was burning the city. The great fires light up the whole country around. They must be going to evacuate the city, we said, and are going to leave it in ashes. General A.P. Hill shot dead today. He was one of General Lee's most able corps commanders.

April 3rd. Monday. The enemy evacuated the city last night and we are entering it this morning. When the mayor came out and surrendered the city, what there was left of it, as they had burned considerable of it, to Colonel Edwards, who had charge of the skirmishers. The skirmishers were the first to enter the city of Petersburg. There has been some dispute as to who were the first to enter the city, but I know for I was there. Lee's skirmishers had been gone hardly 20 minutes, when our skirmishers entered the city. The 37th Massachusetts regiment were at once ordered into the city, to preserve order and were the only troops from the 6th corps to enter the city. We remained in the city but a short time, and then pushed on after General Lee and his forces.

Apr. 4th. We are pushing on after Lee and his demoralized army. At night where he



In taking the fort we had to jump down into a wide, deep ditch

halted, we found a man that had been murdered, (probably a Union man,) his head was smashed and he was stabbed through the heart. Supposed to be the work of guerrillas. We buried him.

Apr. 5th. Still driving Lee up with hard marching. In the morning an order was read to each regiment asking the troops to cheerfully endure hardships and hunger if necessary, in order to insure the speedy downfall of the rebellion which was greeted with cheers and followed by another hard day's march. The corps joining Sheridan's forces at Petersville late in the evening. Sheridan captured 6 pieces of artillery, three miles of wagon train, the brigade of pioneers, and 16 battle flags.

Apr. 6th. Early in the morning we formed a line of battle, throw out our skirmishers and advanced through a large piece of woods. Expected to find Lee's forces entrenched there, and have a battle, but he gave us the slip in the night. Then we pushed after him. Sheridan and his cavalry leading. We caught up with Lee about noon. Then they had a running fight for several miles. As we were pushing on, following Sheridan, we crossed a very large open field where Sheridan caught up with Lee's forces and had a hard battle. We found many of the dead of both sides. Sheridan's men were all stripped of their clothing and arms of the bodies horribly mutilated. We said we would have our revenge. Finally, they got in a position where they held Sheridan, a place called Sailor's Creek. Sheridan opened on them with his artillery, but could not dislodge them. He waited until the 6th corps came up, after which we formed our lines, then marched down quite a hill, across the creek, wading waist deep in mud and water. Reformed our lines in line of battle, then lay down and waited for Sheridan to file around to the rear of the enemy. When all was ready, we rose up and began an advance up a hill through scattering pines and some brush. After advancing about 40 or 50 rods we found them, (knowing well where they were.) They gave us a terrible

volley, sending some of the line back a little. But we gave them shot after shot as fast as we could which was not slow, for with our Spencer rifles, (the only magazine gun in the army) in about 20 minutes we had the best of them. Then they threw up white flags, which means surrender. So we stopped firing and many of the boys walked right into their lines, (we were not more than five rods apart,) supposing they were honest in their white flag business, but when we got among them they pounced on us like tigers, using their bayonets, swords, and butts of their guns. In an instant, we saw their game, and met them at their own ground, using the same weapons. Those of our line that had not mixed in with the rebels opened fire again and we soon had them prisoners. For Sheridan was in the rear and they could not retreat. We captured 15,000 prisoners, including the rebel General Ewell and his staff, General Curtis Lee, (son of Robert E. Lee) several batteries and six miles of wagon train. When the battle was about over, and we had fallen back a little, I noticed an old grey-bearded rebel looking around among our dead and wounded. I soon learned he was shooting our wounded. As I saw him shoot one, I said to myself, you old devil, you're shooting our helpless wounded men. I raised my rifle and fired and he dropped. There, said I, you have shot your last shot. On some of the prisoners we took we saw the Union blue clothes of Sheridan's soldiers that was killed back on the large open field that we passed in the forenoon. This is the 21st battle I have been in and the only one when the bayonet was used so freely. Mr. Samuel Eddy of my company was run clear through with the bayonet. I saw him after the battle sitting on the ground. I says to him, you are wounded? He said, they have run a bayonet through me. I looked and saw where it entered his body and came out his back. He said it did not hurt so very much, when it went through, but the man twisted it when withdrawing it, but the man never bayoneted another soldier, for Mr. Eddy was so indignant that he shot the man

then and there. I told him they would come with an ambulance for him. I never expected to see him again, but this rewriting of my war diaries, January 1904, he is living in Chesterfield, Mass. and quite well. Our regiment lost many in killed and wounded in this battle, which was the last one of the great Civil War before General Lee surrendered.

In the midst of the battle, when we were using our bayonets and the butts of our guns and shouting to them to surrender, a private of our regiment came face to face with a colonel of a South Carolina regiment. The private says: Surrender! The colonel says, I cannot. My pride will not allow me to surrender my sword to a private. Where is your colonel? I will surrender my sword to him. The private says: "He is somewhere in the field, but you must surrender to me or I will shoot you down. The colonel says: I cannot, and the private shot him. As the colonel fell, the private bent over him and says, Do you think I done wrong to shoot you? The colonel says, No, you did not. I was a fool to throw away my life for my pride. He asked the private if he was a Christian. He answered yes. Then the Colonel says, Won't you pray for me? I cannot die like this, and while the tempest of battle was raging the soldier knelt by his side and offered up a short, fervent prayer for the departing spirit and at its close the dying officer joined in the Amen. He gave his sword to the soldier, also his gold watch, a few keepsakes and a message for his wife, asking him to send them to her at the first opportunity, giving him the address. The soldier said he would, then picked up his rifle and continued on in the battle.

Apr. 7th. Cloudy, with some rain. Still pushing on after Lee and the remnant of his army. Reached Farmville at 11 o'clock. P.M. Halted for an hour in its main street. The boys loaded themselves down with tobacco as there were two or three large warehouses full of it. I did not take any as I never use it. The cavalry captured artillery and prisoners and wagon trains. We passed where the rebels had burned a large wagon train of their own, 200

wagons and a number of cannon and caissons to prevent them from falling into our hands. The contents of the wagons strewn on the ground. Today, General Grant demanded a surrender of Lee and his forces, but it was not accepted.

Apr. 9th. Sunday. Fine day. Still pushing after Lee. About 3 o'clock this afternoon we arrived to within 3 miles of Appomattox Court house. A flag of truce in our front and a cessation of hostilities for a time. Grant and Lee are holding a consultation for peace. At 4 o'clock, P.M. General Lee surrendered himself and his entire command to General Grant. The glorious news of peace has come. Oh! what a day! We are all tired, but seem to forget our weariness. Such cheering and shouting. Hats going into the air, bands all playing, the batteries have all opened, far and near, firing blank cartridges, and everything looks like a grand jubilee, which in a half hour more would have been a battle had not Lee surrendered. Soon an orderly came riding along saying: "General Grant requested us to be quiet as he did not wish to mortify the feelings of General Lee, his officers and men more than the surrender would do."

Apr. 10th. Monday. Remained quiet all day, having a good rest. No more tramping after the rebels. Wrote to Julia, home and my brothers.

Apr. 11th. Wet day. This cruel war is over. Thank God for it, and that I have been spared to go through it alive and whole. Today, we start back toward Richmond. Went to near Farmville, about 20 miles, a hard march, the roads being so muddy.

Apr. 12th. Still marching back. Passed through Farmville. Found rebel soldiers that were captured before Lee surrendered. Am feeling well.

Apr. 13th. Morning rainy. Reached Burksville this afternoon at 2 o'clock, pretty well played out.

Apr. 14th. Beautiful day. Lying still and resting, which we all need, having had but very little rest or sleep since we broke the lines at Petersburg on the 2nd of April. Farmville is a

right smart town, as the colored man said, and a great tobacco center. Received letters from Julia and from my cousin Deborah Snow. Wrote to Julia. Was promoted to orderly Sergeant today. Drew two day's rations.

Apr. 15th. All quiet in camp at Burkesville, resting.

Apr. 16th. Sunday. Beautiful day. All quiet. Have just heard of the assassination of President Lincoln. What will the rebels do next? Received and wrote letters. One from J. W. Gurney.

Apr. 17th. Monday. Still resting in camp. Receiving and writing letters. One from Lieutenant Sheldon.

Apr. 18th. We boys put up a fence around Sergeant Ezra P. Cowles's grave of our company, who was killed in the battle of Sailor's Creek. Parker reported back from the hospital for duty. Wrote to Frank.

Apr. 19th. Fine day. The papers are in mourning for the death of President Lincoln, whose funeral occurs today.

Apr. 20th. Monthly inspection and dress parade today. Had an illumination of the camps in the evening. We took candles and put them on the tops of our tents. (The camps for miles around were lighted up.) We then formed in line and carrying our lights with us, marched through each other's camps and past headquarters. It was the most magnificent torchlight procession I ever saw. There being probably 15,000 men in the lines. It all started from a camp rumor that Johnston had surrendered. Wrote to comrade Sheldon.

Apr. 21st. Warm day. Had company drill and dress parade. The 9th corps moved, reported they were going to Washington. Wrote to Julia.

Apr. 22nd. Drew three day's rations of everything, five of potatoes. Orders that we should all wear government caps and shoes.

Apr. 23rd. Sunday. Fine Day. Had order last night to be ready to march at 5 o'clock this morning towards Danville, which we did to the disappointment of us all, as we were expecting to go to Washington. Had a hard march of 22 miles. Stopped at night at a small

village, Keysville.

Apr. 24th. We marched to Stonington river, 25 miles. The country is very fine, well fenced and in good condition. At noon we halted for coffee andhardtack (as we call our bread,) and salt pork, many of the boys eating their meat raw. This was on a very fine plantation. Our division filed out on the left of the road into a large clover field which was in full blossom and very heavy. We had a fine roll in it and got some of the dust off our clothes. The 2nd division filed to the right of the road into a very large wheat field which was just ready to cut. We took some of the fences for fire to make coffee. We met a great many from Johnston's army down in North Carolina, who had deserted from their ranks and were going home. Most of them lived in Virginia. We talked with them some. They said it was of no use to fight any longer, many of them had their horses with them and were going home to work on their farms. Some of them had been gone from home four years. The negroes who had deserted were coming in pretty fast, so glad to be free. They seem quite intelligent considering the advantages they have had.

Apr. 25th. Warm. Marched at 6 A.M., passed through Laurel Mountain, a small village; arrived at Halifax Court House about 5 o'clock, P.M. The negroes came in crowds to see us pass, old men and women and children. It was quite amusing to see some of the little ones, slightly resembling undressed kids. On our march today we passed another plantation (as we did many of them every day,) and at the gate that crossed the road, leading to the house from the public road there was quite a gathering of negroes, old and young, the younger ones hanging onto the gate and older ones peering through it. Comrade Pepper of my company asked an old negro how far it was to Petersville, a place we expected to pass through during the afternoon. The old negro replied, "Well, sah, I reckon it's about two looks and a hornblow, and a right smart chance beyond." That is the way most of the colored people and many of the whites reckon

distance. The two looks would be from one high point of land to another, and from that to another, and a horn blow would be as far as you could hear one of their horns when they blow it (and you can hear them a long distance,) and the right smart chance beyond, you would have to guess it. They would tell you one, two, three horn blows according to the number of high points of land there happened to be. They knew but very little about rods or miles. We stopped for the night at Banister, a small village. It has the same dirty appearance of all Virginia towns and the marks of slavery upon it.

Apr. 26th. Warm. Started at sunrise. Marched through Brookline, a village of one house, a store, tobacco factory and three or four negro huts. Halted at sunset after marching 18 miles, passing through fine country. Expect to reach Danville in the evening, tired and foot-sore. It is quite a large village. We have marched 100 miles in 5 days. The advance guard arrived in town about 10 o'clock A.M. today.

Apr 28th. Warm and pleasant. Resting. There is a printing office here, some of the boys went in and started a paper calling it THE 6TH CORPS. There are all trades represented in the army. There were quite a number of cars and engines at the depot, in good running order. Sheridan and his cavalry came in today. A great many negroes coming in from North Carolina. Some of them right smart ones. At night we hear officially that Johnston had surrendered on the same terms as Lee did. There was an arsenal in Danville where the Confederates made small arms and cannon. The rebels tried to blow it up, but did not succeed very well. There was about 100 lives lost. They had much better success blowing up their own citizens than they did blowing up the arsenal. We looked over their work, saw their guns finished and unfinished. They looked coarse and rough, not much mechanical skill about them.

Apr. 29th. Fine day. We go into town and buy a few luxuries such as beans, corn meal and sorghum, so we had a good meal of In-

dian pudding and beans. Near our camp is a large park an trotting course.

Apr. 30th. Sunday. At 11 o'clock this morning was mustered for pay by Colonel Allen of the 6th Wisconsin volunteers All quiet. Wrote to Julia, home, Francis and Horatio. No passes to town today.

MAY

May 1st, 1865. All quiet. The last brigade moved on the cars today. The 2nd expected to move today, but did not. Pulled down tents and put them up again. Letters from Julia, John and Mr. Guilford.

May 3rd. Fine. We took the cars for Burkesville this morning. The railroad in bad condition and the cars more so. Hardly safe to ride in; but a little better than marching on foot, though not much faster. Several car loads of soldiers from confederate General Johnston's army living in Virginia going home, and one or two partly loaded with negroes. We passed through a fine country, found the farmers plowing and planting.

May 4th. Fine day. Arrived at Burkesville this morning. Here we changed cars for Wilson's Station. One year ago today we started from Brandy Station, since then our regiment has lost in killed and wounded 530 men. When we left Brandy Station we had less than 600 men. Since then have had veterans and recruits from the 7th and 10th Massachusetts regiments added to ours. Now we have about 300 men all told. After drawing 2 day's rations we moved to Wilson's Station and went into camp. The brigade is located along the river.

May 5th. Warm. Some of the boys went fishing in a pond about two miles from here. At night two corps from Sherman's Army came up to us on their way to Richmond and Washington.

May 6th. We have a very pleasant camp here, situated in a grove of white oaks. Sherman's army is passing on a road about 5 miles west of us. They march about 20 miles a day. There are guards stationed at the different houses along the different roads. Wm. Parsons of our company is corporal of the

guard. This guard is to protect the property, houses and their occupants from the bummers that follow along with the army. Letter from Charles. Wrote to Julia.

May 7th. Sunday. Cooler. Inspection this morning. Colonel Oliver Edwards of the 37th Massachusetts started for home on leave of absence. Wrote to John, Charlie and Mr. Guilford.

May 8th. Warm. Just doing camp duty. Wrote to Horace Smith.

May 9th. Had a fine rain last night. Today company drill.

May 10th. Cool. In the evening there was a plantation singing by some contrabands, (both old and young) that came into camp. It was really quite entertaining. Received a good letter from Webster Nash and his sister, Mary.

May 11th. Had drill and dress parade. Thunder shower at night. Drew 5 days rations of everything in the eating line that we could get.

May 12th. Letter from Francis and answered it. Wrote to Julia.

May 13th. Nothing to do. Some of us boys went to see a dam built by beavers. It was about ten rods long, six or seven inches through and about three feet high. There were trees in it.

May 14th. Sunday. Warm. All quiet in the camp. Some citizens attended church with us today. Preaching by Chaplain Morse. This is my 32nd birthday.

May 15th. Received orders to be ready to move Thursday for Richmond and Washington. Rumor that Jefferson Davis is caught. Daniel McCray, of our company, was discharged as were several others for disability, worn out and gone home like a great many who could not endure it any longer.

May 16th. Fine day. I am not feeling well. Had dress parade with brigade band to play.

May 17th. All quiet and lonesome to me. A brigade inspection, every man must have a cap when they pass through Richmond, many of us were wearing soft wool hats, myself

among the rest.

May 18th. Hot. Left Wilson's Station at 5 o'clock A.M., made 16 miles at noon, and 25 miles all day. Marched to within 3 miles of Petersburg. Halted on the ground where we fought the rebels the 2nd of April. Two men from the 2nd Rhode Island volunteers died from sunstroke.

May 19th. Hot. Marched but 16 miles today. Went through Petersburg this morning, then took the pike for Richmond. Not feeling well.

May 20th. Shower. Reached Manchester at 10 o'clock, A.M., today. Manchester is across the river from Richmond.

May 21st. Hot. Had a heavy thunder shower in the night. The wind blowing almost a hurricane. Blew down some tents.

May 22nd. Warm. Am just resting, as I am nearly played out. At night another heavy thunder shower, and very heavy wind. Received a long letter from Julia.

May 23rd. Fine and cooler. I left Richmond for Washington by transportation with the sick and those that could not march. Went as far as City Point. The 6th corps marched today.

May 24th. Beautiful day. Waiting here for transportation. Looking around the city.

May 25th. Still waiting here at City Point. All quiet.

May 26th. Very rainy.

May 27th. Cold and stormy. Still waiting.

May 28th Sunday. Pleasant. Wrote to Julia. Attended a church in the chapel.

May 29th. 10 o'clock, A.M., now on our way to Washington on board the steamer Massachusetts, good bye to City Point. 4 o'clock, P.M. we are now at Fortress Monroe, leaving and taking on passengers.

May 30th. 8 o'clock, A.M., going up the Potomac. Have just passed Mount Vernon. 1 o'clock, P.M. have arrived at the Soldier's rest at Alexandria, Virginia. Have dinner of pea soup which was good. Wrote to Charlie.

May 31st. Warm. Still at the soldier's rest as our corps has not yet arrived. Am feeling a little better. Wrote to Julia, Francis and John.

JUNE

June 1st, 1865. Hot day. The corps has not arrived yet. Wrote to Herbert and Adaline.

June 2nd. The corps has arrived and we shall join it tomorrow.

June 3rd. Warm. Joined our regiment today at Bailey's Cross Road. Was glad to be with my regiment again. Found my brother Henry from Cleveland, Ohio, waiting to see me. Was very glad to see him. Had a good visit. Received letter from Julia with her picture. Also letter from Francis and Louise. Near the Arlington Place, nearer the river is a large mule corral with more than 2,000 mules in it. These mules were bought by the government for use on the wagon trains. The artillery always used horses as they were more reliable.

June 4th. Hot day. Henry is with me today, but starts for home this afternoon. Went as far as the pines with him. About a mile.

June 5th. Warm. Major Tyler tried to have battalion drill, suppose he wanted to show off. The boys were rather saucy to him, called him "Old Goggles," (he wore glasses.) They knew the drill was uncalled for and I suppose thought they had drilling enough, so he had to give it up as a bad job.

June 6th. Cloudy. Wrote and received letters.

June 7th. Drew clothing.

June 8th. Hot. Review of the 6th corps today in Washington, the other corps had their reviews a few days before we arrived from Danville, Virginia. The boys had a hard time of it, many men dropped down in the street. Some died. I did not go as I was not able to go.

June 9th. Warm.

June 10th. Cool and cloudy. Thunder shower this afternoon. Waiting for the muster-out rolls to come and be filled out so we can go home.

June 11th. Sunday. Morning inspection as usual. Dress parade at 7 o'clock, P.M.

June 12th. Our muster-out rolls have come and we are now at work on them in earnest.

Shall have them done in a few days.

June 13th. Warm. Working on the rolls.

June 14th. Cool. Wrote to Henry.

June 15th. Cool. Still working on the papers. Am feeling a little better.

June 16th. Cloudy.

June 17th. Rolls nearly done.

June 18th. Hot. Wrote three letters and received one.

June 19th. The rolls are done, but have to be examined by the mustering officer.

June 20th. Had a heavy thunder shower this noon. Now it is much cooler.

June 21st. Warm. Mustered out of the United States service today, and it is a happy day to us all. Start for Boston tomorrow. Received a long letter from Julia.

June 22nd. Hot. Broke camp early this morning for Washington. Left Washington at 12 o'clock noon, for home. Goodbye to old Virginia. The 82nd Pennsylvania escorted us to the Potomac River where we bid them farewell. Waited a few hours in Washington, then took the train to Baltimore, arriving there at 3 o'clock P.M. and left at 6, arriving in Philadelphia this morning the 23rd, where the citizens gave us a good breakfast at the cooper shop. We were always treated right royally there, and shall always remember the meals we ate in the cooper shop, as some of the best we ever ate.

The citizens of Philadelphia fed more than 2,000,000 soldiers at the celebrated cooper shop during the Civil War, as troops were continually passing through the city, no matter whether day or night, or how many. When you arrived you was always invited to the cooper shop where you found plenty to eat and the best of it, and what was best of all a fine place to wash, with good clean towels. 1,000 soldiers could wash at the same time.

We took cars to South Amboy, then by steamer to New York, where we were received by citizens of our own state. They gave us a good dinner of clam chowder, after which w had 400 baskets of strawberries and 8 bushels of cherries. We all felt happy, unless

women who had left a brother buried on southern soil. All of us left friends and we did not forget them in our happiness. But we all felt happy in the thought that we were soon to meet friends whom we had left at home and who were anxiously awaiting our return. I called on my 2 brothers, Frank and Francis, while in the city. After dinner we marched up Broadway, Cornell Street, then to the wharf where we took the steamboat for Hudson at 6 o'clock, P.M. The scenery was very fine going up the river until too dark to see. Arrived at Hudson on the morning of the 24th, where the fire company, band and citizens gave us a warm reception and a good breakfast. Left at 7 o'clock, A.M. for Pittsfield, a reception awaited us there at 9 o'clock, A.M. Stopped there 3 hours, then left for Springfield, where another reception awaited us. Left there at 5 o'clock, P.M., was in Boston at 9 o'clock, A.M. Saturday.

June 25th. Sunday. Beautiful day. Now in Readville, came here from Boston last night. Glad to return to old Massachusetts once more.

June 26th. Monday. Went down to Swampscott to see brother Herbert and wife. Found them well.

June 27th. Remained with Herbert all day. Returned to camp in the evening.

June 28th. Fine day. Wrote to Julia, John and Charlie. Went back to Herbert's as there was nothing to do in camp.

June 29th. Adaline and I went berrying.

June 30th. Hot day. Came back to camp, found we were not going to paid off until Sunday.

JULY

Jul 1st, 1865. Went into Boston and looked around some.

July 2nd. Sunday. Pleasant. We were paid off and got our discharge papers today, and it has been one of the happiest days of my life. A free man and a citizen once more.

July 3rd. Monday. Beautiful day. We left Readville for home this morning. Oh! what a day for us all! Arriving at home found all glad

to welcome the soldier boy home once more.

Explanation

Our rations (what we had to eat and drink) when on the summer campaign usually consisted of salt pork,hardtack (something like a cracker, only softer) and coffee. That was our bill of fare, morning, noon and night; whenever we had a chance to cook our coffee, sometimes we had a little sugar. At one time for a few weeks we had fresh beef for meat, large herds being driven along with the army, and what was wanted for a day's rations was killed, dressed and issued at night after the day's march was over. The boys did not like this and threw a great deal of it away. Many had no convenience for cooking meat, though some carried a small sheet-iron frying pan. I carried one all through the war, and brought it home as well as my Spencer rifle, equipment, tin plate, cup, knife, fork, spoon and canteen. Salt port was eaten raw by thousands of boys.

When in winter quarters, our rations varied a little, at times we had beans, dried peas, and what was called desiccated vegetable, sort of a mongrel mess, most of the boys threw it away.

Abatis (or slashing as it is sometimes called,) is where earthworks are thrown up along the edge of a woods or through them of the earthworks trees are cut down and fall on the works. No limbs are cut off, but all trimmed out and cut off to a point which makes it almost impossible for one to crawl through and scale the works.

A pontoon bridge is made by anchoring boats in the river about 12 feet apart, then laying timbers or stringers from one boat to the other. They were so made that they could be fastened to the boats very quickly, then laying plank onto the stringers. Some of the boats were made of wood and some of canvas. These bridges were carried along on wagons to be ready for use when wanted. This was called a pontoon train.

Officers and Privates of My Company That Came Home

Charles K. Edwards, Captain

Flavel K. Sheldon, 1st Lieutenant

David M. Donaldson, 2nd Lieutenant

William H. Shaw, Orderly Sergeant

Sergeants

Bennett H. Pepper

John H. Brines

Edward W. Hooker

Frederick A. Moody

Corporals

John H. Bissell

George A. Bisbee

Dwight M. Chapman

Henry G. Chapin

William E. Parsons

John E. Rockwood

George L. Streeter

Albert Stratton

Privates

Talcott Bancroft

Augustus P. Bates

Charles H. Bly

Walter G. Brewer

Amaziah E. Burcham

Horatio K. Calkins

John C. Chapin

Calvin S. Cooley

Cyrus W. Cross

Albro C. Hale

Henry Hall

Frederick M. Hannum

Timothy W. Hoag

Charles B. Knowlton

Charles W. Mansfield

Charles W. Nash

Sumner L. Niles

Ephraim W. Pittsinger



Points of View

Shirley Alger Kaminski

To the human eye, the hawk is a symbol of freedom, of mastery in his element, a bird of swooping beauty. Against the sky, he soars in ever-widening circles, drifting, dipping ...

To the hawk, the ever-changing panorama of clouds and green earth swinging constantly before his alert eyes is commonplace, though he exults in his power. With his telescopic vision, he searches hungrily for a dark shape, a sudden movement ... *there!* He silently circles lower, lower, lower ...

Far below in the meadow, the mouse creeps through the high grasses, each stalk towering protectively over him. He comes upon a wide space where the grass is flattened, and through these stalks he sees another such space ... huge man creatures have walked here. He pauses in the clearing with the sun warm on his body. Then, too late, he is enveloped by a large, swift shadow, grasped in sharp talons and is carried skyward, his pitiful shrieks unheard.

The Old Milk Pail

by Alia Crowley 1991

Just an old pail that was found in a barn,
Once an important part of the farm.
Now dirty and old, with many a dent,
Thrown and forgotten, with handle now bent.
Once held rich milk, both morning and night,
Foamy and warm, for the cats, a delight.
First spurts of milk made a musical sound,
Alerted the cats to rally 'round.
The pail carried milk that would journey afar
In bottles bearing the name of the farm.
The familiar old pail, now dented and marred,
No longer used in the broken-down farm.

W.S.H

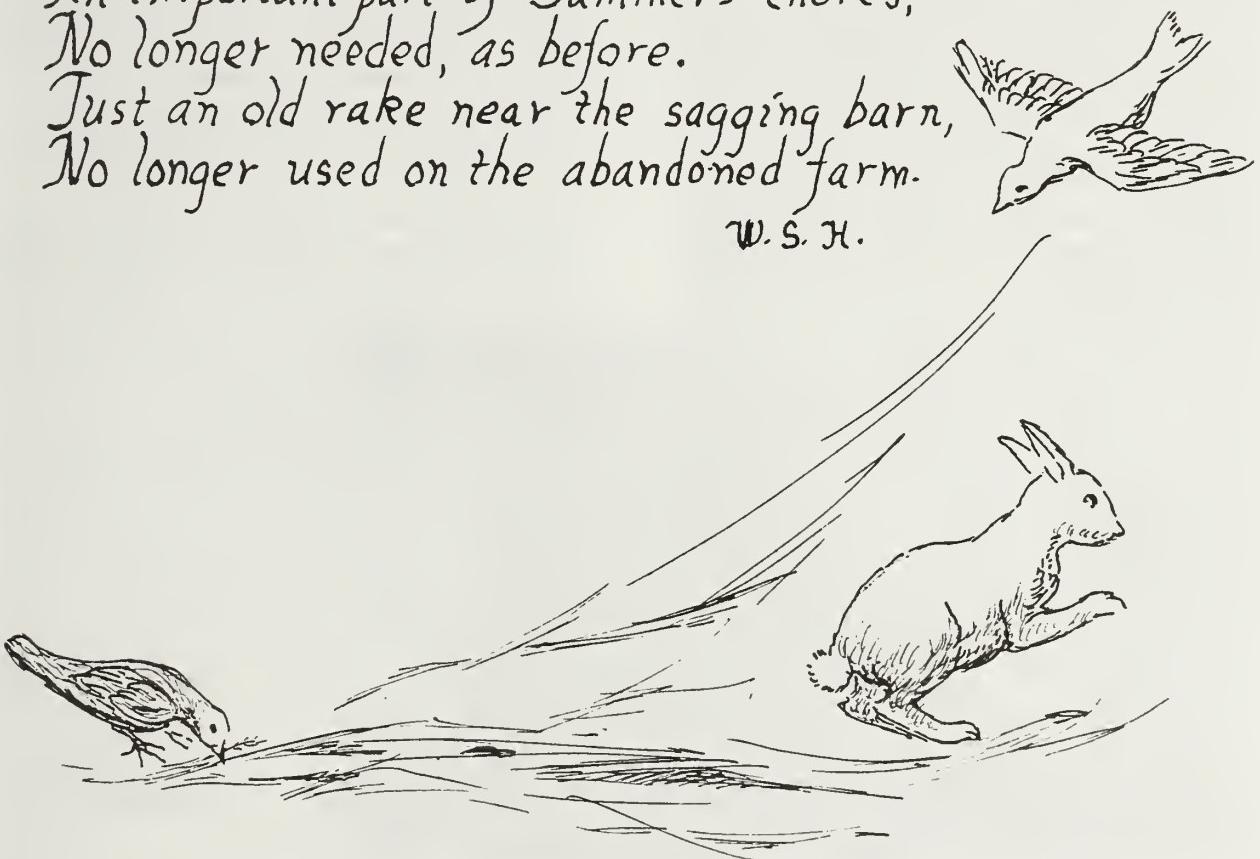


The Old Hay Rake

by Alia Crowley, 1991

The old hay rake stands near the barn,
A remnant of past days on the farm.
Forgotten, neglected, no longer of use,
Rained and snowed on, rusted, abused.
Gone are the days when it would go
Up and down fields, after hay was mowed.
Up this one, down one over there,
The birds would fly up, rabbits run scared.
Up and down, round and round,
A monotonous, rattlely, metallic sound.
An important part of Summer's chores,
No longer needed, as before.
Just an old rake near the sagging barn,
No longer used on the abandoned farm.

W. S. H.



Memoirs of a Granville Girlhood

1913–1927

May Aldrich Hague

I grew up on a 365 acre farm on top of the hills of West Granville, Mass. Much of it consisted of woods, brush and rocks, though there were orchards, meadows and springs. Various parts of the farm were called the barn lot, the new-plowed piece, the oat piece, the south lot and the twenty-acre lot, which was part of our pasture. Beyond that was The Parson's Lot, originally owned by a family of that name. Our boundary on the west was the Hubbard River—requisite for the study of a lovely eco-system, except that we had no pond.

My life actually began in Newfane, Vermont, up in a mountain home on the West Wardsboro Road, owned by my father's sister, Min Tuttle. My father and mother took my year-old sister, Leona, up there by train to await my birth. It was in July, 1913, and they went there because my Grandma back in West Granville wasn't up to taking care of my mother and a new baby. Babies were born at home in those days, and the washing alone with no running water or mechanical helps would have been too much for her to handle.

My folks waited for two weeks to see if there would be a baby sister or baby brother. During those days, Daddy carried and walked Leona, a toddler, over the nearby hills and pastures. They tell me that bears could be heard calling at night.

On July 18, the doctor was called, but I arrived at midnight, before he did. No one could scientifically predict the sex of a baby in those days as they can today. However, I turned out to be a baby sister, weighing 8 ½ pounds, and was named May Francena, after my mother's favorite month and her mother, Francena Augusta Nelson.

After two weeks, the four of us came down to Westfield by train and I spent my childhood at the farm of my grandfather, Major Nelson. Daddy worked on the farm and at times in sawmills, except during WWI, when we moved to Agawam where he worked on a farm of Sam Bodurtha's for a year or two.

I remember very little about my grandmother, who died when I was around four. She lay in bed for eight months with a



The
Nelson Aldrich
Homestead

stroke and Grandpa took care of her, as my mother was busy taking care of us babies and the household. My grandfather was quite displeased with my mother because she had a baby in haying time when he needed her to rake after the cart! And it had happened two years in a row!

One thing I remember about my grandmother, actually or from hearsay, is that she made us "birdies' nests" from apples, by peeling the apple half way down, cutting it in two horizontally, and sprinkling the inside with a few grains of salt.

Besides cooking and baking, canning, cleaning, and helping with the gardening, my mother had to wash diapers for both of us by hand, and give us our bottles—No Pampers or jars of baby food in those days! She certainly had her hands full.

In those days all laundry was hand-washed. Every Monday, if it wasn't raining, my mother would heat quantities of water on the stove. It had to be pumped into pails at the kitchen sink and carried to two large wash-tubs that stood on a wooden frame with a hand-wringer raised between them, a cumbersome contraption that was hard to operate and was set up and taken down and carried into the back shed every washday. She used a sturdy washboard, leaning in a tub of hot water, on which she scrubbed the clothes with yellow laundry soap guaranteed to roughen the hands of anyone who used it. Then she'd put them through the wringer, run by a crank, and they would fall into the other big tub of rinse water slightly tinted with blueing. It always was a mystery to me how blue water could make white clothes whiter! After swishing them around in the rinse water, they'd go back through the rollers of the wringer again, which could be turned to another position, and they would drop into a big clothes basket. Washing good-sized cotton diapers for two baby girls (secured with safety pins,) was a daily job!

The clothes were hung to dry in the attic in winter, and outside on many clotheslines during other seasons. I can remember how,

when the lines were in the dooryard near the open woodshed, the swallows would dive down at us as they thought that we were too near their nests. They would dive at the cats, too, with a little click that would make anyone take notice!

Washing and hanging up clothes would take most of one day. Bent over a scrub board and really rubbing soiled clothes must have been a very tiring and tedious task.

Besides washing and drying all kinds of clothes, the linens, dresses and aprons had to be starched and ironed. "Putting up" the clothes then followed. That meant sprinkling the dried clothes and tightly rolling them up so that they would be damp enough to iron well a few hours later. That and ironing took a good part of another day.

We had three or four black iron flatirons kept hot on the stove, and when one iron would cool in use, we'd clap the handle onto a hotter one from the stove.

As small babies we wore undershirts, long slips and long dresses, stockings and at first, flannel belly-bands. We had little sweaters, often hand-knitted or crocheted, and sometimes cotton flannel sacques or jackets. When we started to walk, we wore rompers. At one time, probably pre-school age, we wore what was called a Ferris waist as part of our underwear. It was a sort of undershirt with two rows of buttons around the bottom edge to which could be fastened our drawers, garters and petticoats. Practically all our clothes were made by mother or relatives. Often the color or print of our dresses might differ, but the style would always be the same.

In winter, we wore long underwear. Our first walking shoes were little black, buttoned shoes which came above the ankles. Then shoes began having laces. Our little shoes we wore for best were one strap, one button sandals. I still have a pair of my little black button shoes.

As we grew old enough to go out to play, how handy ski suits or snow pants would have been in winter. We had to wear heavy skirts, felt leggings inside rubber boots, and

Leona and I slept upstairs where our bedroom had no heat. But our bed had a fluffy feather bed on top of the mattress, flannel sheets, and many quilts. We undressed in a warm closet off the "sitting room," and flew up the cold stairway and jumped into bed, snuggling up to get warm. Sometimes we took a hot water bottle to warm the foot of the bed.

For heat in those days, we had a Home Comfort Range in the kitchen, a nice big stove in the sitting room, and a small but wonderful one in what was once the parlor. My grandfather lived till 1931, and we sometimes sat in the sitting room with him. At other times we spent evenings in "the parlor." The larger heating stove had little windows of mica or ising-glass in front and a rail to rest our feet on. I remember how often on winter evenings I'd sit around that stove with my mother and I asking each other the U.S. capitals. Later, around 1930, my uncle bought us a little Crosley radio (which I still have,) and through earphones we'd listen to programs. One of my favorites was "Jessie Crawford at the Organ" from the Paramount Theater in New York City. Later we had a bigger radio with a speaker. The four of us would sit around that at night listening to Amos and Andy, Lowell Thomas and the News, Lum and Abner, The Firestone Hour, and Kate Smith, etc.

The kitchen fire we kept going all day in summer, for baking, cooking, canning and an ever-ready supply of hot water, which was heated in a big copper tank built in at the end of the stove near the firebox. Early on, we had to bring the water in from the outside well, which we pumped into pails. It was a big improvement when a pump was installed at

the end of the kitchen sink!

My father had to spend a good deal of the winter cutting down trees for firewood. After trimming off small branches, he'd saw the trees into sled-length logs and bring them up to our dooryard on a horse-drawn sled. There was always enough snow in those days. We loved to go down in the woods and ride back on the load. Daddy would sometimes make us a brush shanty to play in while he was working in the woods.

After all the wood was drawn up, he'd get help to saw the logs by steam engine into stove-length wood. If these pieces were too big around, he had to split them on a chopping block. Some were kept as "chunks" for the livingroom stove. The split wood made a huge pile in our dooryard, and my mother really enjoyed carrying wheelbarrows full of it into our two woodsheds. (She always enjoyed working outdoors.)

We really had the very best of food even though we were far from a market. Most everything was grown right on the farm and organically. My folks would carry eggs and butter to Westfield to a small market to trade for flour, sugar, spices, etc. and we'd buy beef, fish, oranges and bananas. We raised our own poultry and pork. Daddy kept bees which gave us honey, and we made vinegar from apple cider by storing it in a big barrel in the cellar to ferment. Sometimes rats would get into our cellar and would have to be trapped.

In our cellar would be huge bins stocked with several kinds of apples, (mostly Baldwins), potatoes, turnips, winter squash, carrots, onions, and cabbage. Our cupboards down there would be stocked with canned peas, string beans, corn, apple sauce, peaches, pears, etc. Also, there would be jars of jams and jellies. Mother canned mustard pickles, and relishes, bread and butter pickles, and some pickles were "put down" in crocks. Daddy's hard work in his well-kept garden paid off by giving us this huge food supply for winter.

We kept cows and had plenty of milk, the cream from which was churned into butter.

Of course we kept some for whipped cream, and occasionally we'd have the treat of home-made ice cream made in our old freezer, turned with a crank. The nearest thing to it today in taste is Breyer's Ice Cream.

There would be three or four calves born each year. We named one Pat, who was born near St. Patrick's Day; another, we called Abe; and another, Wash. One of our cows, Cora, "with a kind and gentle nature," was easy to milk, so both of us tried our hands with her occasionally. I wasn't as enthusiastic as my sister was and never liked the taste or smell of milk.) Would you believe, though, that I liked to help clean the stable?!!)

Leona and I always enjoyed riding on top of a load of hay on its way to the barn from the hayfield. We'd have to lie flat as we entered the barn doorway or we'd be decapitated or brushed off the load.

In summer, we'd often go after the cows for Daddy. We'd walk down the lane, which was about twelve or fifteen feet wide and about a fifth-of-a-mile long, fenced in by stonewalls and chokeberry bushes. It was often muddy and we had to pick our way from hummock to hummock or stone to stone. But it was a lovely place just the same, with wild apple trees flowering along the way and an old ash tree near the head of the lane. At the end of the lane was a huge old rock on which we sat the day Leona impressed me with the news that thunder bolts were big, iron bolts the God of Thunder threw down from the sky during a thunder storm, and if one hit you it would kill you!

If the cows didn't appear at the gate right away, we'd call, "Come, Boss! Come, Boss!" and listen for the bell worn by the lead cow. (Every spring when first driven out to pasture, the cows choose a leader. By a little pushing and shoving one cow would assert herself and thereafter be the First One to enter the lane going and coming—a little "Cowocracy!") If we didn't hear the bell, we had to go look for them, listening for the deep tone of the old copper cowbell, for it would save us a lot of walking if we could head the cows

in the right direction. We carried walking sticks to steer the cows toward the gate, or to break up a hassle between them, and also to help us over rough or muddy ground. In some places we had to fight off huge laurel bushes that overhung our paths. Eventually, we'd get to the ledges, where we might sit for a minute. From there was a grassy incline leading toward the sap-house, where the maple tree sap was boiled to make syrup, and if the ground were dry, we liked to lie down full-length and roll down the hill till rocks became too numerous to dodge.

We always hoped that the cows would be in the southern part of the pasture where the walking was easier. (Daddy cursed the terrain of our pastures, comparing them with those of Vermont, where he came from.) In the south pasture, we'd stop by our best spring of water which was directly down the hill from the barway. It had such a flow of water Daddy encased the middle of it with a wooden box or frame so the cows could have clear water to drink, unmuddied by their feet.

Once a cow my sister was driving reversed the procedure and turned to chase her! Leona went round and round the rock till she found a place where she could climb through the thicket of brush and up onto the rock where she sat "screaming bloody murder", more out of anger than fright.

When we got the cows to the gate, we would drive the cattle up to the barn where Daddy would be waiting to hitch them in



their stalls; we didn't have stanchions.

We also had a hen house full of chickens, so there were plenty of eggs, and chicken, stewed, fried, roasted or made into chicken pie. The hens would have the run of the dooryard except in winter, but toward dark we'd have to go out to close the henhouse door so a fox couldn't get in. The chickens always went in by themselves and settled on the roosts above the nests for the night.

I always was a bit afraid to cross the yard if it had gotten dark, and could imagine all sorts of creatures waiting for me. One night, I dreamed that as I crossed the dooryard, it seemed unusually light, and upon looking up, there was a beautiful chandelier hanging from the sky right over my head!

Daddy always bought two young pigs in the spring and raised them to be butchered in the fall. They furnished the most delicious pork roasts and chops, hams, sausages, and bacon—much more flavorful than any you can buy today. When cut up, smoked, stuffed, or whatever, these portions were stored on shelves in the back buttery for the winter. By warm weather, we'd eaten it all. Oh, yes, the fat was boiled—"tried out"—and turned into lard for shortening, and making pies. Slabs of fatty pork meat were salted to make salt pork, a staple of country people, though it was no choice of mine except when a bit of it is cooked with green or baked beans.

Daddy grew popcorn for us, and made us molasses candy. He'd boil the molasses to the right stage, stir and cool it, and when it grew rather stiff, he'd grease his hands, take out the whole "blob" of it, throw it over a big iron hook on the kitchen wall in the back kitchen, and pull it over and over again. It would grow lighter and lighter in color, and harder and harder to pull. Then, he'd pull off long strips of it, and lay them on a big, three-foot square marble on top of a barrel to cool. Before the strips hardened, he'd cut them into pieces about 3" long. What delicious candy! But such hard work making it! Taffy was made the same way. He would also make us "wax on snow," in maple sugar season (February and

March) when he tapped the maple trees about a mile from our house. We'd boil syrup to the right stage—he had a way of testing it—and we'd drip it over a pan of fresh, clean snow. It would harden, becoming waxy and stick our teeth together! We'd also take some boiled syrup in a little sauce dish and stir it till it turned amber to light tan and became a creamy sugar that we called "putty"

Mother would make us peppermint and wintergreen drops by first boiling sugar and water. At the right stage she'd add extract of wintergreen and a couple of drops of red food coloring to half of it, and drop little drops of it on waxed paper. The rest of it would have peppermint extract added to it, so we'd have some pink and some white creamy, tasty candies.

During long winter evenings, before the days of radio, we'd sit in the room with the little stove, (the parlor, before my day) reading and eating popcorn or eating apples fresh from the cool cellar. (Going down cellar I'd always look up for "cellar spiders", little white, thread-like spiders that scarcely moved. I didn't want them to drop onto me!

On a shelf at the top of the stairs was Grandpa Nelson's box of cut plug chewing tobacco! When he bought a new batch, he'd sit and cut it into portions to store till he needed a new "chew". My mother said that if the price went up, he'd cut it into smaller pieces. We took it for granted, but she wasn't too thrilled with his spittoon beside his chair (which he aimed at successfully most of the time.)

The books I recall that we took turns reading aloud were *Peck's Bad Boy*, *Billy Whiskers*, and Joseph Lincoln's stories of rural Cape Cod. Sometimes in the evening we'd play games such as Parchesi, Dominoes, Checkers, or Uncle Wiggly. Sometimes at bed time Daddy would tell us stories of his life in Vermont as a young man. Sometimes we'd go to the kitchen for another snack before going to bed. I'd like a doughnut dipped in molasses and a cup of weak tea. If there were no doughnuts, bread and butter spread with molasses

was equally good.

One of our amusements in the daytime was playing house, anywhere we could find a place, sometimes with paper dolls we cut out of magazines or sales catalogs. My sister Leona was so patient cutting out extra clothes, furniture and even dinnerware. We laid them on a card table up in the rag-room, at the top of the back stairs. One day I pushed the door open, not knowing she was in there and the draft blew every last bit of paper right off the table. That was a disaster!

We played in the attic, looking at old furniture, books and magazines, and jumped on the feather beds stored up there during the summer.

We played in the woodshed and horse barn, and even made domiciles outdoors, one in the cleft of a big split boulder, and one across the road in a long-abandoned pig pen. That place was fun, for it had real walls and a roof and a little fenced-in yard. We'd gather "greens" and make believe we were cooking them in some old pots or pans, and invite "guests" to which Leona was great at giving names.

The joy was always in the making. Once we were settled we'd turn nomadic and go looking for another place "to live".

In the summer, when the barn was filled with new mown hay, we had much fun climbing the ladder to the loft and jumping down into the hay, though we came away itchy and scratching from the hay that got inside our clothes.

For years, we boarded student ministers and summer boarders from New York. They were well-educated and brought much enrichment into our lives, even telling us some things about our own wild flowers and birds. Two of them read or recited Walt Whitman and Omar Khayyam to us. On Sunday afternoons, they and mother and we girls often took walks together. We had a croquet lawn, too, and on early evenings or Sundays in summer, my mother enjoyed a game of it with one of our boarders or us girls.

We always had a colony of cats and kittens, free to live in the barn or house. We'd dress

them up in dolls' clothes and take their pictures. My father made us skis, though it was so rocky on any of the hills it was hard to find a good place to ski or to slide on the new sleds he bought us one Christmas.

We were given dolls when we were nine or ten years old, with beautiful layettes—all gifts and work by Aunt Mayme in Bristol. We usually went to Bristol for a week or so in the summer, and on this particular day she led us through the parlor on the way to our bedroom. We could hardly believe the sight before us! On each of two big easy chairs was a handsome doll, dressed, and surrounded with extra clothes, trimmed with lace, etc., Leona named hers Shirley, and I chose Virginia for mine. I still have mine, which shows much use, wear and love. Her wig is missing and her lips are worn off.

Leona used to make fetching little hats for them, out of silk scraps of various colors. They were about the only dolls we ever had and I think we enjoyed them the most when we were ten or twelve years old. (We had more imagination by then.)

Daddy put up swings for us in the maples by the front lawn. It was a place we headed for in summer when it was time to do the dishes.

I used to like to go out in the shop which had a workbench, tools and a forge. I liked to saw and nail and try to make things, but I don't remember any finished products. I just like to try out all kinds of tools.

Daddy had another way of earning extra money besides selling wood and trapping fur. It was by taking photographs, developing and printing them in his darkroom and making postcards to sell in stores in nearby towns. He always had a good camera and a good eye for composition. In Vermont he'd taken portraits as well as views. He would ask 5 cents each. I know a man today, in 1988, who has some of Daddy's Granville views and asks \$4.00 each for copies of them!

Another skill he had was repairing our shoes for us. He had a shoe last of iron, a stand with three or four removable shoe-sized

forms. A shoe would fit over one so he could nail new leather onto the sole of it. He also had six or seven other cobbler's tools.

Leona and I had all the ordinary childhood diseases—mumps, measles, chicken pox and whooping cough. When I was around 10 years old, I developed pneumonia along with whooping cough. I couldn't sleep for coughing, and as big as I was, Mother would hold me and rock me in front of the fire in our big wicker rocker. Dr. White came over from Granville in his horse and buggy and said I was very sick and should have a nurse night and day till I reached the crisis—which happened with pneumonia. A lovely woman from Granville, Sue Phelon, who had been a nurse overseas in World War I, came and stayed with us a few weeks. They put me in the room with the little stove to keep me warm, and the first thing Sue did was to open one of the windows wide, which terrified Mother, it was so cold outside. I couldn't eat, so Sue would rub my entire body with olive

oil every day for nourishment. When I began to recover, everyone tried to get me to drink milk, which I'd always hated. For every glass of milk I could get down, I'd collect a nickel from my folks, Uncle Olin and Mary Degano, the Granville Center postmistress. I saved (earned!) enough to buy my first Swiss wristwatch!

One morning I woke up hungry and wanted hash for breakfast. I tasted so good, and from then on my appetite began to return, though during my childhood I was a finicky eater.

When I was fourteen, and Leona fifteen, we left home to stay with our uncles in Connecticut during the school year, as we had no transportation to Westfield High School. Leona stayed with Uncle Leland in East Hartford, and I with Uncle Olin in Bristol/

I guess you could say our childhood was about over by then, although that might be open to question.



West Granville Church and Academy Building

Part Two of A Granville Childhood will be an account of West Granville's country school and recreation.

The Good Old Days

By William S. Hart

In any of our beautiful seasons in New England it is relaxing to drive through our hilltowns and see the well maintained farm houses and what few barns have withstood the aging process.

The present generation sees this and must think the era it represents was less pressured than today and how great it must have been to live among all this splendor even though it might have been boring at times.

I don't intend to disillusion them; however, many of us can think back to when most farms were in poverty. The houses weren't painted, the lawns, if they had one, grew wild. The roads were a quagmire in spring, a dust cloud in summer, and unplowed in winter.

As a youngster, in the early thirties, I lived with my parents at my grandfather's farm. In its prosperous times, between 1880 and 1920, it was a success because of income from several sources.

The mainstay was the dairy herd of thirty milking cows. Added to this was income from an up-and-down sawmill, a gristmill, orchards, chickens, tobacco, raising and training horses, supplying teams for hire, selling ties to the railroad, and a small stagecoach franchise.

My mother was the only girl of seven children. This required a large house heated by fireplaces. My grandmother had a hired girl, from the local orphanage, to help her. The farm operations required two or three hired men. I have a diary of grandmother's saying "we sat eighteen for supper last night."

Touch on the thought of preparing and cooking three meals a day for all those people and still have time to can for the winter, make clothes for the children, and clean and keep the house in order. Almost daily entries in the diary of 1891 repeated this type description:

"made 7 loaves of bread, 6 pies, a card of gingerbread, a pan of cookies, baked a pan of beans."

By the time I got there in 1932, at age ten, the farm had been reduced to the dairy and a small egg business trying to survive the Depression.

It still had no running water, depending on a hand pump in the kitchen. There was no electricity or inside plumbing. One advancement was that several fireplaces were blocked off and a hot air furnace, fired by wood, sent hot air through floor registers in the living and dining rooms. The only other heat was from the iron stove in the kitchen.

Maintaining a continuing supply of wood was a problem. Most farmers had some acreage used for a woodlot. For us, during the cold weather, it took three days a month to supply wood.

The first day we cut trees by hand with Collins Company axes. My uncle felled the trees and it was my job to cut the limbs off to have a smooth log or pole. A full day was spent there with time out for a walk back to the house for lunch.

On day two we used a double runner sled, pulled by the team of horses, to haul the logs down the rutted, stony hillside to the shed attached to the house.

The third day the wood was cut to stove or furnace length and thrown into the woodshed.

The cutting was done by a circular saw. The two of us lifted the log onto a table type arrangement that pivoted at its base allowing the upper part, with the log, to be pushed into the saw. While the log was being cut I stood to one side and caught the twelve inch piece that dropped off and threw it into the shed.

After a while I lost the strength in my young hands and had to cradle the pieces in my arms. By the end of the day the skin between my gloves and sleeves was rubbed raw. Just think, now I complain a little when my wife wants a fireplace fire because company's coming for an evening.

The power for the saw was supplied by an antique 1920 Maxwell automobile. It was jacked up and the left rear wheel replaced by a three foot diameter and eight inch wide metal wheel the width of the leather drive belt attached to the end of the rotating saw.

My uncle hand cranked the motor while I sat in the driver's seat and worked the spark and the throttle. Once it warmed up I shifted through the three forward speeds into high gear. To maintain the high speed, needed to power the saw, there was a makeshift, three ball governor to regulate the throttle.

I really think it quite nice to just turn up the thermostat for more heat.

You must remember each day there was still the ongoing chores of handmilking, feeding, and carrying out manure for thirty cows plus the horses. The chickens were fed and watered and eggs collected to be cleaned and sorted by the women in between the household duties. The good old days? Hah!

A bath in wintertime was quite exhilarating. With no inside plumbing, a galvanized circular tub three feet in diameter and a foot deep was set by the floor heat register. Milk pails full of water were drawn at the kitchen pump and heated on the wood stove and dumped into the tub.

There was heat in the drafty room but it was not uniform as it primarily rose from the register and collected under the high ceiling. I remember how I steamed as I dried off with an unbelievably scratchy, coarse towel. Immediately into a nightshirt and wool socks and a dash up the steep back stairs to an unheated bedroom where loose windows rattled with the wind. Quickly under the quilts and eiderdowns with just a nose sticking out.

The mattress and double, wooden slatted bed was not a "posturepedic." It was stuffed

with horsehair that, in many places, worked its way up through the ticking and into some part of you.

I couldn't sleep crosswise because, through the years, being a double bed, a ridge had built up down the middle. There was also a sag so you could only sleep on your back or partly on your side. I think this is where I developed my good snoring.

Ofcourse the typical one handled, china pot was under the bed to save a chilly, nocturnal visit to the windy outhouse attached to the rear of the woodshed.

By five in the morning the old house, with no insulation, storm windows and banked fires cooled down to real chilly conditions. You got dressed in a hurry and threw wood on the fires and headed for the cow barn where the low ceiling and body heat from the animals kept it around seventy degrees.

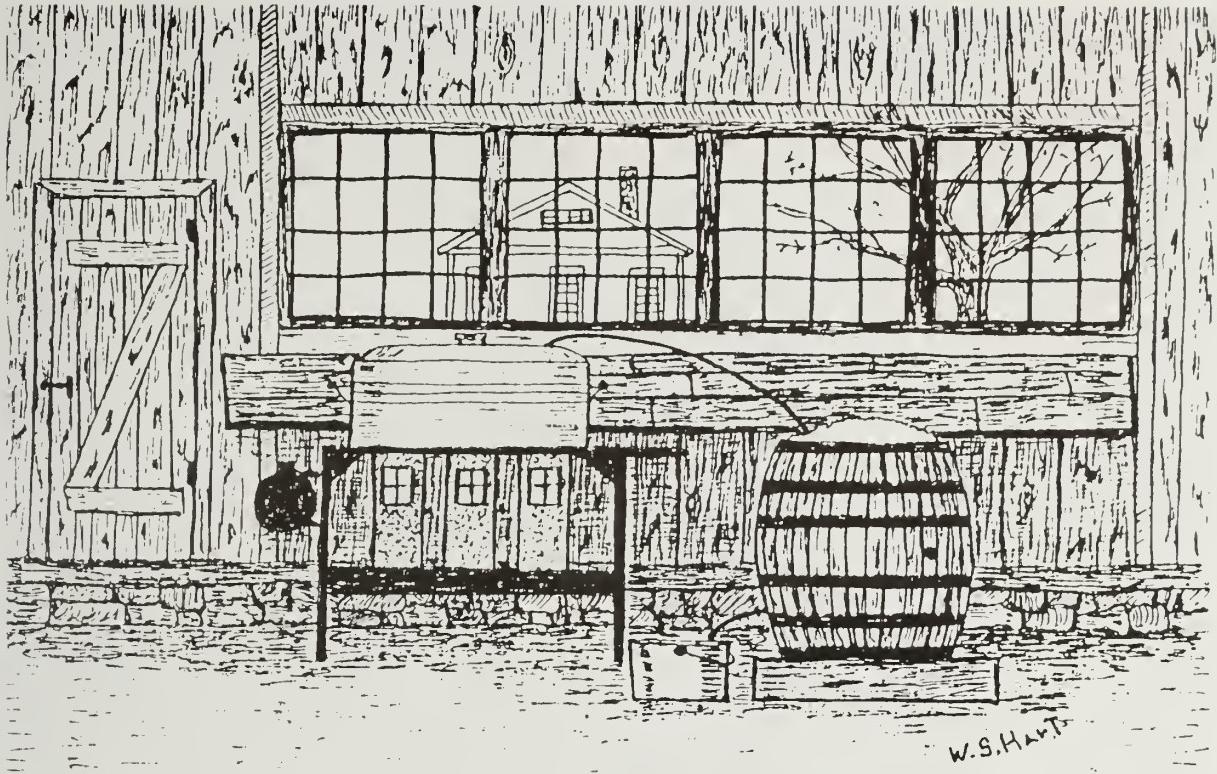
I almost forgot. Without electricity we read or did "make busy" things while sitting around the dining room table with a big kerosene lamp in the center. To go upstairs or the woodshed meant lighting a small, hand held lamp to guide the way.

The evenings were short, unless company came, as there was no TV or radio to entertain. Both tiredness and boredom drove you to early slumber.

Our farm was a tenth of a mile up a dirt road off the highway. There wasn't the modern snowplow so some storms would strand us for up to a week. During the hard storms the old mortise and tenon house shook with the winds and gave off weird creaking and snapping sounds.

The milk truck, with its dual rear wheels, could break through the deep drifts to get to the milk house but the 1932 Essex sat in the barn until the snow melted enough or the plow got to us. During spring mud season it also sat many a day waiting for the roads to be passable.

Prohibition was on then and my father cautioned me not to tell my schoolmates what was going on during Sunday afternoons in winter.



W.S.H.A.Y.

The barn across from the house was built to strip tobacco leaves grown on the farm. You stepped down two feet onto a hard dirt floor. There were deep counters, waist high, built under rows of windows that gave light to strip the leaves.

My father, uncle, and some cronies set a three burner kerosene stove in the middle of the room. I recall the blue, enamel cylinders with isinglass showing the orange glow of the flames.

They placed an old, oblong, copper wash kettle on top. The cover had a copper tube soldered to it that reached to the side and then formed a descending coil inside a fifty gallon cider barrel and came out the bottom.

Hard cider, fermented from apples grown in our orchards, was boiled in the kettle. The barrel was filled with snow, and when the steam went down through the coils it condensed and was collected in a bucket at the bottom. This was put through three times and the resulting cider brandy, or applejack, came out, according to them, at 120 proof, or 60% alcohol. I think the next year Prohibition was

repealed which ended those clandestine afternoons.

The Depression was tough on farmers so they didn't waste much. It's great, nowadays, to charcoal black angus steaks but back then we never heard the name. Good steer beef came from the West and was expensive. Every so often a milk cow got old and went dry. The animal was butchered for its meat; however, it wasn't like the juicy steaks we have today. The pasture was atop a steep mountain and each day the cows had to climb up to good grazing land, down again at night. As you can imagine, this exertion toughened the muscles and the resulting steaks were like chewing fibrous leather without any real flavor.

Today, the super market chickens are grown on special grains and confined in a crib so they'll not be toughened by exercise. The usual chicken we ate was a hen that had stopped laying.

As a youngster I thought it cruel the hen was grabbed by the legs, the neck laid on the chopping block, and the head cut off with the axe. Immediately the chicken was thrown out

the wide door of the woodshed and ran crazily about, bumping into things, sometimes clucking noisily, until the heart pumped out all the blood and it collapsed.

Following this it was placed in a big kettle of boiling water that had just come from the wood stove. After a few minutes the water cooled enough so you were able to pull out the feathers by hand. Later the remaining pin feathers were singed off over a candle flame.

When we were five or six years old grandpa would cut off the chicken legs at the joint where the feathers started and attach a string to the tendon that went to the talons. By pulling the string we opened and closed the claws and chased each other, screaming, around the yard.

Remember now, we just mentioned tender chickens of today. The old hens were not only tough but seemed to have a skin a quarter inch thick and rubbery. The only way to eat these old birds was to fricassee them and serve with dumplings and thick white gravy.

Following the theme of the "good old days" our cool drinks, today, are easily made by emptying an ice cube tray. It was much different getting it from the mill pond in winter.

Several men, using long saws, with a handle at only one end, cut parallel lines through

the thick ice, measured it into block size and, with iron tongs, hauled it out of the water onto a sled. The team drew it to the ice house to store it for spring and summer use.

The ice house we had was fifteen feet square and had four double walls with a tall door in one. The space between the walls was a foot wide and was filled with sawdust. The ice, itself, was also insulated with sawdust between the cakes so they wouldn't melt and freeze back together.

I think it odd that fire was one of the hazards of an ice house. Apparently, what happened was the sawdust fermented and produced wood alcohol which could ignite from spontaneous combustion and burn the building down.

Enough of my reminiscing. I'm sure you can recall many such things from your youth but let me say this. For all I've written, I still am in love with the glorious New England countryside. Our seasons are all wonderful and each brings out the beauties of our hill towns.

A drive through the hills or a short walk by a crumbling stone wall or abandoned cellar hole or well can let us escape to the inner areas of ourselves where the only real peace can be found.

Genealogical Inquiry

I am looking for information/ancestors/descendants of my paternal grandfather whom I never met nor knew. His name was Thomas R. Bishop, born approx. 1878 in Bath, Maine. Any information/leads would be appreciated.

Thanking you in advance,

Harry Bishop
71 Basket Street
RR 1, Box 27
Huntington, MA 01050-9706



The Diamond Jubilee of St. John's Church Chester, Mass. 1915 - 1990

By Louisa Piergiovanni

I am a little church
(no great Cathedral)
Far from the
Splendor and squalor
of hurrying cities
My life is the life of

The Sower and the Reaper
My prayers are prayers
Of earth's own children
Whose only sadness and joy
Is my grief or gladness

Author Unknown

Diamond Jubilee MCMXV - MCMXC

"Hi-lites" of the Early History

Background

The following is taken from the *Catholic Observer*, July 1, 1955. "The first Mass in Huntington was said in 1849. Father William A. Blenkinsop of Chicopee said the Mass, according to parish records at Chicopee. Yet even as late as 1866 the people saw a priest no oftener than once a month. Father Carroll who was pastor at Westfield celebrated Masses at stated homes, first in a cottage on Basket Street and thereafter in the Town Hall. In 1880 under the energetic leadership of Father Thomas Smyth of Westfield and Thomas Davis of Huntington plans for a church were made; more than \$2,000 was raised and land, the Whipple Estate, was acquired. Work was immediately begun. A great rock was blasted at heavy expense, and the church began to rise on this rock. The church was completed at the cost of about \$8,000, and on September 17, 1881 Bishop Patrick O'Reilly dedicated the edifice. Father P. J. Harkins, third pastor of St. Jerome's, Holyoke preached the dedicatory sermon. In 1886 the Parish of St. Thomas was established and Father Lawrence Derwin was assigned to it as first pastor. He was succeeded in 1891 by John J. Fallon; in May 1896 by Father Richard S. J. Burke; in December 1896, by Father Thomas McLaughlin. Father Michael Coyne followed Father McLaughlin; and Father Austin O'Malley followed Father Coyne. Father O'Malley in 1915 built the pretty Saint John's Church in Chester at a cost of about \$5,421. Father John J. McCarthy followed Father O'Malley and he in 1928 constructed Our Lady of The Rosary, Russell, from the same set of plans used for St. John's. St. John's and Our Lady of The Rosary are twin churches.

St. Thomas parish comprised the towns of Huntington, Chester, Russell, Blandford,

Montgomery, Woronoco, and Worthington situated in two counties of Hampshire and Hampden. In 1968 Russell, Blandford, and Woronoco became the separate parish of Our Lady of The Rosary.

St. John's was known as a Mission Church because the pastor and curates were assigned to the Mother Church, St. Thomas. In Chester, the Mass was celebrated each Sunday, all Holy Days, every first Friday - at 6 a.m., Lenten services were held weekly, and often "Holy Hours" were celebrated.

In the 1930s and 1940s Missions were conducted about every three years. A priest from an order such as The Passionist or Redemptorist would come for a week. Evening services which included a sermon and morning Mass were held. Beautiful rosaries, holy pictures, statues, etc. were on sale. Prayer leaflets were given as a souvenir at the end of the Mission. Missions were a period of grace, penance, spiritual growth, sacrifice, and reconciliation. One of the last Missions conducted by the Passionists was on Nov. 4-7th, 1956.

Interesting "Firsts" or —

Mr. James Murtough, Father Marcus Murtough's father, was one of the founders of the church.

Mr. Carmin Dalesandro, known as Charles Dalesandro, was one of the men who helped dig for the foundation; he had a team of horses. He lived in the large house on the corner of what now is Route 20 and the Old State Road. Having come from Italy where every church had a bell, he wanted to donate one to St. John's. However, it was decided that the structure of the church could not "support" a tower and bell.

Some of the families (grouped by relationships) who were members of St. John's in

1915: 1. Stephen Salvini - Willey; 2. Dinah - McGowan-Haskins; 3. Antonio Piergiovanni - Michael Pergiovanni; 4. Thomas Tracey; 5. Samuel Donnelly; 6. Leasot - Barrett; 7. Charles Dalesandro - Thomas Dalesandro; 8. Sabastiano - Lopresto; 9. Leone; 10. Eustachio Pietrosanti - Petersante; 11. Cornoni - Whitcher - Davenport - Wheeler; 12. Francis Boyer - LaBleu; 13. Sturgeon; 14. Lucy - Battles; 15. Hart; 16. Mullen; 17. Dunn (Mary, Mike); and 18. Spindell.

Some of the original members of these families are still here in Chester at St. John's. There are 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generations members here also. Others have moved away but are still in touch; and others may be forgotten. Some of the families have "died-out."

The parishioners celebrating their Diamond Jubilee this year (1990) as members of St. John's are: Eva Leasot Barrett, Fred Haley, Louise Haley, John Tracey, Maria Piergiovanni (oldest - 96), Rosina Piergiovanni, Mary Besancon Salvini (second oldest - 92), Randolph (Nin) Salvini, Fred Salvini, Margaret Sturgeon Salvini, and Marcella Whitcher Wheeler. There are several "runner-ups."

First Activity

While the church was being built a field-day supper was held. The women under the supervision of Laura Tracey and Mae Leasot put on a "pot luck meal." Peg Sturgeon Salvini was then 13 years old and waited on table. Some of the activities and games were held at the ball park. The Tracey boys and Hart boys had some type of sale booth to raise money for a window in the new church. They must have succeeded because there is a window donated by the Tracey and Hart boys. The Messier boys, members of one of the early families, were also part of the project for raising money for the window.

Altar Boys

Fred Sturgeon and Bill Hart were the first altar boys. They served so long that they "outgrew" their robes. Nin Salvini also was one of the first altar boys. They were followed by

Marcus Murtough, John Tracey, Donald Donnelly, Francis Salvini, Blake Sturgeon, Dominic Piergiovanni, Herbie and Benny Di-Santi, and Guy Baldini. The "more recent ones" are Michael Salvini, David Zucker, Joel Sakaske, Skippy Woodis, George Young, Glenn Bruno, Shawn Laurie, Jay Larkin, and Nicky Dalesandro, and also Jason LaMothe. The present altar boys are Andy and Danny DeMoss and Kevin Shippee.

Finances

The cost of building St. John's was \$5,421. The Sunday collection for a year (1915) was \$312. The insurance premium was \$6.00

Marriages - First in 1916

June 5 - Joseph Salvini to Mary Besancon

June 5 - Harry E. Willey to Leah Salvini

This was a double ceremony.

June 7 - Frank J. Cornoni to Avelina Whitcher.

Baptisms

May 1915: John S. Percy

Angelo Leone

Nancy Davenport

Nov. 1915: Rosina Piergiovanni

Choir

Perhaps the first organist was Sara Haley Harrington and the choir a people's choir. The Haley girls (Tom Haley family) sang in the choir. For many years Gertrude Haley was a member of the choir and often a soloist. Louise Haley and Eleanor Barrett Laurent were organists; also Phyllis Salvini Donovan.

Cleaning the Church

Laura Tracey, Mary Salvini, and Lucy Donnelly were the first ladies to clean. Water was carried to the church. When Francis and Grace Salvini were old enough they carried pails of hot water to the church. These ladies did all the linens for the church. Later the members of the ladies' group did the cleaning.

Time of Mass

Mass at St. John's in the late teens and early

twenties was 9:30 on Sunday because the priest came from Huntington by train that arrived at 9 o'clock. For first Friday the priest came on Thursday evening to hear confessions; and stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly. After the 6 a.m. Mass on Friday, the priest would return to Huntington by train.

Sextons

The first sexton was Thomas Tracey, Sr. He was sexton until his death. His son Thomas Tracey, Jr. took over until his death. Bennett Larkin was sexton for a period of time. Presently, Charles Pease, Tony Piergiovanni, John Salvini, and Kyle Salvini serve as sextons and ushers.

Catechism

Religious classes were at first held in the church on Sunday after Mass. The priests were the teachers at first. Then lay people, usually young women, helped the priest. Peg Sturgeon Salvini was one of the first teachers. The classes were divided: grade 1-4, grades 5-8, and high school. The text was the Baltimore Catechism, Volumes 1-2-3. The cost at first was 5 cents and later 10 to 25 cents. Prayers, vocabulary, sacraments, commandments, etc. were stressed and learned. The parts and meaning of the Mass, how to attend Mass, the importance of the altar, and the reason why statues were in the church, were all explained and taught by the priests.

Ladies' Group

In the 1940s a Ladies' Group was formed. The group was so large it was sub-divided into the Middlefield St. group, The Prospect Hill group, and the Maple St. group. Later the "younger people" formed a group known as the MRS (not because they were married) group - Middlefield St., River St., and School St. These groups had social activities, fund raising activities, and took turns cleaning the church.

"In His will is my will"

Marcus Murtough, born in Chester on Oct. 2, 1909, lived on William Street until his family moved to West Springfield in 1926, is the

only "Native" to become a priest. He entered the priesthood and was ordained on Dec. 5, 1933. He studied in Rome from 1930-1934. His first parish where he was an Assistant was Mt. Carmel, Springfield. Then he was assigned to St. Mary's, Lee, Ma. The rest of his priesthood was spent in the eastern part of the state, where he was pastor of several churches. He retired at the age of 75. He now resides in South Barre, Ma.

Rose Mary Dalesandro, daughter of Nick and Mary Dalesandro, is the first and only female religious from St. John's Chester. Rose Mary took her Perpetual Vows of her religious profession as Sister M. Judith Dalesandro O.S.B. of Oliven Benedictine on August 6, 1985 at Holy Angels Covent, Jonesboro, Ark.

Renovations

The first major renewing and redecorating of St. John's was started in 1957 and completed by Easter of 1958. At this time the present altar (facing in the opposite direction), communion rail, Shrine of our Blessed Mother, Shrine of St. Joseph, the dossal veil and cornice, the crucifix, the credence shelf, and the sanctuary shelf were donated to replace the original. The interior was painted and carpeting added. Father Joseph Gagan was Pastor.

The second major change came at the time of Vatican II. The position of the altar was changed and a confessional installed in the back of the church. Previously, confession was heard in the sacristy on a kneeler. Father Richard McIntyre was Pastor.

Of course, over the years, there were all the necessary items; such as, a new roof, painting the exterior of the church, converting the furnace from coal burning to oil, and care of the grounds.

"Bits of Interest"

During the 1920s a YWCA camp known as Brookside Lodge was located at the beginning of Johnson Hill Road, on the left. During the summer vacation season the girls would attend Mass at St. John's.

In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was stationed at what is now Bannish Lumber Co. Several Army trucks would bring the boys to Mass. Bill Rheaume, our present Lector, was one of the boys.

When Sherwood Forest was first started, many of the residents came to Chester to Mass.

Presently the Walker Island people and the Bonny Rigg Campers share our services.

St. John's has been a second church for many summer visitors. These visitors were and are a part of the parish family. They have contributed to the growth and spirituality of the church.

These "high-lites" are a very small part of the St. John's history. However, from town reports, church records, and "word of mouth"

these facts were put together. It is hoped that continued research and interest by the present members, young, old, and in between, will produce a written history that can be printed.

Many changes have occurred in the past 75 years. Some of us have seen and been a part of the changes. There have been changes in church building and the format of the liturgy.

St. John's is an artistically pretty and liturgically correct church building. However, the church itself is the people. The focus of the attention is the celebration of the Eucharist and the parish community. The parishioners of St. John's are and have been devout, determined, generous, and caring. May we continue to grow to our *Centennial*.

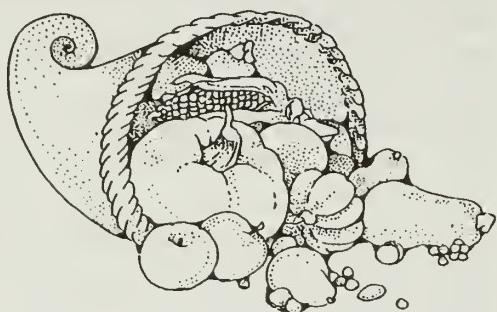


Little White Church on a Hill

As thru dim mists of mem'ry the past I recall,
And scenes of my childhood appear --
There's one that I cherish and love best of all,
That banishes heartache and fear.
I follow a pathway that beckons to me
'Til a summit stands forth bright and still --
And my soul finds its way as I ponder and pray
In a little white church on a hill!

When thru Heaven's glad portals I've wended my way
To adventure in God's further will --
I walk in the light of that bright endless day,
My being with glory a-thrill! --
As I greet my belov'd, and my questioning heart
Seeks an answer -- in memory still
I will lift up my eyes, view with happy surprise --
A little white church on a hill!

-- Alva J. Rhines



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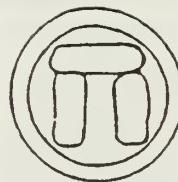
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Vol. 18 No. 3

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